FESTIVALS, HOLY DAYS AND SAINTS' DAYS

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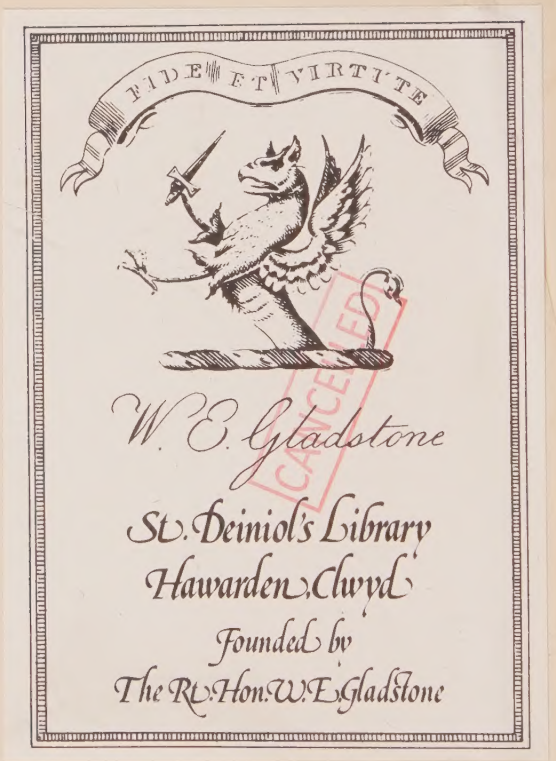

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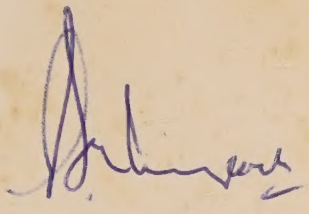

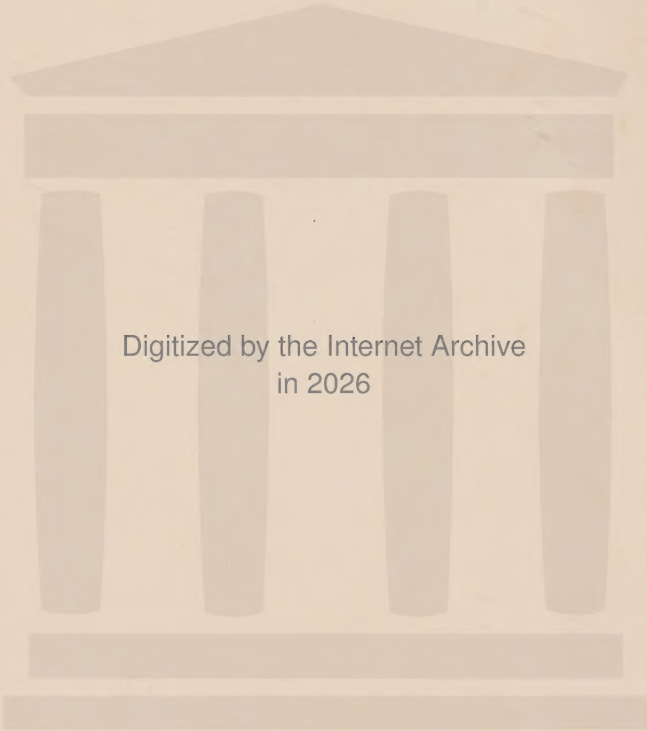

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FESTIVALS, HOLY DAYS, AND SAINTS' DAYS

TRIUMPH OF THE INNOCENTS

W. HOLMAN HUNT

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FESTIVALS, HOLY DAYS, AND SAINTS' DAYS.

A STUDY IN ORIGINS AND SURVIVALS IN CHURCH CEREMONIES & SECULAR CUSTOMS.

BY ETHEL L. URLIN,

AUTHOR OF

"DANCING : ANCIENT AND MODERN,"

"A SHORT HISTORY OF MARRIAGE," ETC.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

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in gratitude for her

invaluable help

PREFACE

MANY great scholars, both archæologists and anthropologists, have discussed the obscurities surrounding the origin of Festivals.

The idea of this little book is not to dogmatize, but rather to note practices still existing, or but lately obsolete, to trace their probable connexion with those of the Middle Ages, and where a pre-Christian connexion can be traced, to mention it with due reserve.

In some cases, bygone ceremonies will be described for the sake of the light they throw on many still surviving amongst us. English ceremonies will be first regarded, and then such Continental or Eastern rites as can be compared with those of the English people, indicating a similar origin. The endeavour will be to select those which deserve note by their typical character, but not to attempt to cover such a huge field as the description of the Catholic ceremonies in all countries must necessarily involve. A little repetition may sometimes occur,

and when this is so, it will be for the sake of comparison with other usages.

Festivals can probably be traced to the feelings of joy and thankfulness common to mankind, when the great processes of Nature come in their annual, yet to the primitive mind, uncertain courses.

The return of spring after the gloom of winter, with its new life in plant and seed, the reappearance of corn and fruit, followed by their reaping and housing later in their seasons; these, roughly speaking, have always been the great events of man's year. The return of the sun after the winter solstice, apparently the great originator of this new life and the bringer of it to maturity; but also in its uncertainty inspiring dread, with the accompanying need of propitiation, and sacrifices; all these things are associated with human beliefs, rites, and ceremonies, in every country from time immemorial.

Very often the Nature-origin of the Festival has been forgotten, and its religious character preserved quite apart from its origin. Scholars have proved the Greek and Roman Festivals to possess these Nature-origins, and the processions sculptured on Egyptian and Babylonian remains, show that to them also, festivals were the appointed

means of expressing their propitiation of, and gratitude to the Powers, whose symbols and images are borne in the processions. To the antique mind, to whom Nature supplied an endless succession of symbols, there was no sense of incongruity such as we might feel to-day, in mingling ideas which seem to us so diverse, but to them so obvious, as the death and resurrection of a divinity, and the desolation and death of winter followed by the revival of vegetation in spring.

The old Nature-worships died hard, and the Early Fathers of the Church found it advisable to let the people retain many of the old rites, mingling with them those testifying to more spiritual beliefs.

The treatment of the chief Christian Festivals and Saints'-Days will be an endeavour to render more plain this mingling of the olden worship with the new.

1915 ETHEL L. URLIN

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LITURGICAL COLOURS

WHITE (OR SILVER) is used for:

Christmas, Circumcision, Epiphany, Easter, Feasts of Blessed Virgin Mary, and of Saints who were not Martyrs.

RED:

For Exaltation, and Invention of the Cross, Corpus Christi, Pentecost, and Feasts of Martyrs.

GREEN:

For all Sundays, not being other festivals.

VIOLET:

For Advent, Lent, and all Penitential Days except Good Friday, when *BLACK* is used.

CALENDAR

THE ANNUAL ORDER OF THE SAINTS'-DAYS AND FESTIVALS

(The English calendar has been followed, with some exceptions)

JANUARY

1. New Year's Day (Feast of the Circumcision).
6. Twelfth Day (Old Christmas Day). Epiphany.
21. St. Agnes.
25. St. Paul (Conversion of).

FEBRUARY

1. St. Bridget.
2. Candlemas (Feast of the Purification).
3. St. Blaise.
5. St. Agatha.
14. St. Valentine.

MARCH

1. St. David.
17. St. Patrick.
Shrove Tuesday.
Mothering Sunday.
Carling Sunday.
25. Lady Day (Feast of the Annunciation).
Palm Sunday.
Good Friday.
Easter Day.

APRIL

23. St. George's Day.
25. St. Mark.
Rogation Sunday.

MAY

1. Feast of SS. Philip and James
3. Invention of Cross.
Ascension Day.
Whitsuntide.

JUNE

Trinity Sunday.
Corpus Christi.
24. St. John the Baptist, Nativity of (Midsummer Day).

JULY

15. St. Swithin.
25. St. James, St. Christopher.
26. St. Anne.

AUGUST

1. Lammas Day.
15. Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary.
24. St. Bartholomew.

SEPTEMBER

14. Holy Cross Day.
29. Michaelmas Day (St. Michael and All Angels).

OCTOBER

18. St. Luke.
25. St. Crispin.

NOVEMBER

1. All Saints.
2. All Souls.
11. St. Martin (Martinmas).
23. St. Clement.
25. St. Catherine.
30. St. Andrew.

DECEMBER

6. St. Nicholas.
21. St. Thomas.
24. Christmas Eve.
25. Christmas Day (Yuletide).
26. St. Stephen.
28. Childermas Day (Holy Innocents).
31. Last Night of the Old Year.

NOTE. *Saints' Days are omitted with which no special observances are connected.*

FESTIVALS, HOLY DAYS, AND SAINTS'-DAYS

JANUARY 1

NEW YEAR'S DAY: FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST. We begin our survey with the day commonly called "New Year's Day"; and, ecclesiastically, "the Feast of the Circumcision."

Bishop Dowden tells us that the early Christians observed January 1 as a solemn Fast "as a protest against the licentious revelry and excesses of the Pagans at this time of year," and the Second Council of Tours (A.D. 567) specially omitted January 1 from the Christmas Festival. The Feast of the Circumcision dates from the eighth century and suggests that the Church admitted the importance of the day, and had decided to sanctify it.

Many are the customs connected with the celebration of New Year's Day; some purely Pagan, some with a Christian colouring. In Scotland, New Year's Day has even more importance than Christmas itself.

Youths go in procession from house to house singing rhymes of ancient heroic origin, and receiving food or gifts at each house they visit. This pilgrimage is called "Hagmena"; a word of very ancient and doubtful origin, but possibly a corruption of the Greek *agia mene* or "holy month." Popularly, it is converted into "hog-money."

One of the Hagmena songs is as follows:—

"To-night it is the New Year's night, to-morrow is the day,
And we are come for our right and our rye
As we used to do in old King Henry's day,
Sing, fellows, sing, Hagman, heigh!"

A Herefordshire New Year custom is to weave the blackthorn into a sort of globe or crown, burn it slightly in a straw fire, and stand round it, repeating in a monotone the words "Old Cider." The globe is then taken into the house and hung up for luck during the year.

Another luck-charm, described by "The Antiquary," consists of baking a bannock, placing it on the head of the household cow, and determining the luck of the coming year by the direction in which the cake falls when the cow tosses her head. This mode of divination would have required some ingenuity, and considerable latitude must have been left, we think, for individual interpretation.

Many are the weather prophecies connected with

the first day of the year, which is popularly thought to "set the pace" for the coming twelve months. In Buckinghamshire it is said:

"If the first of January be smiling and gay
You'll have wintry weather till the first o' May."

And another old jingle is yet more explicit:—

"If New Year's Eve night wind blow south,
It betokeneth warmth and growth;
If west, much milk, and fish in the sea;
If north, much cold and storms there'll be;
If east, the trees will bear much fruit;
If north-east, flee it, man and brute."

The widespread belief that it is unlucky to let the fire out on New Year's Eve is also, no doubt, connected with weather-lore; the fire being typical of the sun, and of the part sunshine will play in the coming year.

In olden times the ceremony of the Wassail Bowl or Loving Cup was in use. The children used to go "Wassailing" on New Year's Day, singing the lovely old carol:

"Love and joy—come to you,
And to your wassail—too,
And God send you a Happy New Year!"

The Fire-Festivals, common all over Europe at the periods of the Winter Solstice, Easter Eve, May 1, St. John's Eve, and All Hallow's Eve, make their first appearance on this day.

BURNING OF THE CLAVIE. A singular Scotch ceremony, called the "burning of the Clavie" was and may be still used at Hogmanay, the New Year. The seamen and coopers turn an ancient tar-barrel into a sort of wheel. A herring-cask is united to this, being broken up into staves first. A piece of burning peat is put into the machine. The Clavie-bearer takes the burning wheel on his shoulders, and it was formerly taken to every vessel in dock, and a few grains thrown into each to ensure luck. If he stumbles it is considered a great calamity. Another takes charge of the Clavie at a place where two streets meet and makes a circuit of the town. It is borne to a small hill where a kind of altar is erected called the Doorie; then, when one mass of flame, it is lifted down and thrown rolling down hill. People round snatch at the embers and preserve them for the coming year. This takes place at Burghead on the Moray Firth, and is unique.

A favourite ceremony, widely spread in Germany, is driving a wheel, wrapped round with straw and then ignited, down to the river Moselle, or some other water, at the period of the winter and summer solstices, to cause fruitfulness for the year.

FIRST FOOT. Almost everywhere it would seem that much importance is attached to the first foot that crosses the threshold on New Year's Day. In some parts a fair man is considered lucky, in others a dark man is eagerly looked for as a "first-footer," but it seems to be a general superstition that a woman brings ill-luck. In the Stretton Valley it is considered bad luck for a woman to come to a house at all before noon, no matter how many men have preceded her. A Shropshire saying runs: "It is not lucky for a woman or a red-haired man to come to your house first on New Year's Day; there'll be a death in it before the year's out." In Lincolnshire the first-footer must bring something with him into the house, the rhyme running:

> "Take out, and then take in,
> Bad luck will begin;
> Take in, then take out,
> Good luck comes about."

In Northumberland the first visitor must be a bachelor, and to ensure good fortune he should bring in a shovelful of coals. Doors used to be kept barred in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in order to keep out women until after midday. Much of the quaint folk-lore of our land points to a craving for material prosperity, and it would seem natural that this first day of the year should

be selected as a day of omen for the rest, hence the thrifty Oxfordshire housewife who is anxious that the incomings should exceed the outgoings, is careful not to throw out ashes, vegetable refuse, or even sweepings on New Year's Day, believing that if she does this it will mean disaster or poverty for her household within the next twelvemonth.

In Banffshire, it was customary to cover up the peat fire with the ashes and smooth it over. It was anxiously examined in the morning to see if there was anything like the print of a foot with the toes towards the door. This was a sign that one of the household was to leave the house, or die within the year. The first fire was watched. If a peat or live coal rolled away from it, there was to be a break in the family circle.

DRESS, MONEY AND GIFTS. Empty pockets or an empty cupboard on the first day of the year portends a year of misfortune or poverty. Burns, in an epistle to Colonel de Payster, from whom he borrowed a small sum at this season, makes mention of this:

"To make the old year go out groaning,
And keep the new year from coming in moaning."

It is considered very lucky in many parts to wear a new dress on New Year's Day, and if by any chance money should be in its pocket, then a whole

year's good luck is assured. Servant-maids in Lincolnshire say that the first male Christian name they hear spoken on New Year's morning will be the name of their future husband, and in Oxfordshire, village girls say that the first man they see will be like the one they must wed. In Yorkshire the last glass of wine or spirits drained from the last bottle on New Year's Day is " the lucky glass," and whoever chances to drink it will have great good-fortune, whilst should he be unmarried it is a sign of a prosperous wooing and a happy marriage.

Glove-money and *Pin-money* were derived from the presents usual on New Year's Day, and the articles were afterwards changed into a gift equivalent in money.

On January 1 in Rome, about the year B.C. 153, on the day when the Consuls entered annually on their office, it was the custom to give New Year's presents by way of good omen called *Strenæ*, a word which survives in the French *étrennes ;* it was said to be derived from a goddess *Strenia* from whose grove certain sacred twigs were carried in procession along the Via Sacra to the Arx at the beginning of each year. The god Janus was the god of the doorway—he opened and shut, therefore the first month of the year was sacred to him. This is why he is figured with a double head. He was the first of all the gods, and represented the father, the defender of the family, who stands at the door, to prevent ill-comers of all kinds, physical

or spiritual, from entering the house. All beginnings of things are ascribed to him, including the year itself, and he is the guardian spirit of entrances, and the first deity in all invocations public and private. He had twelve altars, one for each month of the year.

In Teutonic countries, the days between Christmas and the Three Kings were called in popular language "The Twelve," "The Days of Fate," or "the Nights of Mystery." No work could be undertaken on them ; above all things, the spindle must be spun for Christmas, or the woman who sat at her wheel during the fateful days would lose her little finger. But all kinds of divination might be tried, and whoever stood at the cross-roads on Christmas Eve (Old Style) would see the events of the coming year pass before him, as the spirit-world was more accessible to man during these days.

In the village of Huttweilen in the canton of Thurgovia, the inhabitants had the power on Christmas Eve of hearing fearful sounds descend the hill on which is perched the castle of Betbut. In the midst of a noise of cavalry and clash of arms, a voice could be heard crying—"Make way, make way on pain of death," until the moment the church bell rang. In these places it was also usual to hear delicious nocturnal music, while those who leant out of the window might catch a glimpse of Odin's (or Wuotan's) Wild Hunt as it passed by, with the penalty of a swelled head afterwards.

The old feast of Yule had been on December 14, but was afterwards changed to the 25th. Sacrifices to the deities of light were offered and no work was done. The masked personages of this time who walked about and frightened children were the discarded deities, and St. Nicholas the successor of Wuotan. In Zürich was held a Fête de Berthold with practices which still exist, the children in their best clothes carry alms to the gates of the great Guilds, and receive in exchange loaves of the New Year and other refreshments; the alms formerly supplied the firing of the corporations who met in these places; and the custom is called *Stübenhitzen.*

The masquerades of the time (A.D. 754) were sternly condemned by the Fathers of the Church, especially disguises of stags'-heads—the old Pagan symbol of the sun.

January 6

TWELFTH DAY, OR OLD CHRISTMAS DAY. The Christian Festival of this day superseded one of the greatest of Pagan ones. Yuletide was sacred to Odin, or Wuotan; he, with Thor and Zio, the Storm-Gods, whom at this time it was necessary to propitiate, afterwards became identified with the Magi, or the Three Kings of the East: Gaspar, Melchior, Balthazar, whose initials were put up on houses in Germany to ward off evil spirits

at this season. The sole relic of the twelve days in England, is the belief that either before or after Christmas, one must eat twelve mince-pies to secure luck for the coming twelve months, one on each for twelve days.

Mince-pies were originally made square to represent Our Lord's Manger, and the colour of the crust, and the contents of the pies, symbolized the gold, frankincense and myrrh offered by the Three Kings. According to the well-known symbolism of these gifts, gold indicated the Holy Child's earthly kingship; incense, His priesthood or Godhead; and myrrh, His doom of death as well as His power to heal and save others from death—for myrrh was the emblem of a physician. If He accepted all these gifts, it was an omen that His life would comprise all the three characters they figured.

The names of the Magi are variously given. One tradition gives them as *Appellius*, *Amerus* and *Damascus:* another *Magalath*, *Galgaleth*, and *Sarasin:* and yet a third as *Ator*, *Sator*, *Peratoras*. They were said to be descendants of Balaam, the Mesopotamian prophet.

Klopstock, in his "Messiah," says there were *six* Kings, who were guided by the Star to the Manger of Bethlehem: *Selim; Hadad*, who left his beloved consort, fairest of the daughters of Bethurim, to undertake the journey; *Zimri*, who taught the people, but whom they treated with

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THE NATIVITY

BOTTICELLI

contempt until his dying hour; *Mirja* had five sons, holy as himself; *Sunith* had three holy daughters; and *Beled* gave half his kingdom to an enemy who wished to dethrone him—thus turning him into a staunch friend.

The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy thus gives the Legend of the Magi Kings.

"It came to pass when Jesus the Lord was born at Bethlehem of Judæa in the time of Herod the King, behold Wise Men came from the East to Jerusalem, as Zoroaster predicted; and they had with them gifts, gold, incense and myrrh; and they worshipped him, and offered unto him their gifts. Then Lady Mary took one of his swaddling bands and gave it to them as a little reward, and they received it from her with great honour. And at the same hour appeared unto them an Angel in the form of a Star, which had been the guide of their way before, and following the leading of its light they departed into their own country. And there the Kings and their Princes came to them asking what they had seen or done; how they had gone or returned, what they had brought with them? And they showed them the swaddling band which Lady Mary had given them; wherefore they celebrated a Festival, and kindled fire according to their custom, and worshipped it, and cast the swaddling band into it, and the fire seized it, and absorbed it into itself. But when the fire went out, they drew forth the swaddling band just

as it was at first, as if the fire had not touched it. Therefore they began to kiss it, and to place it on their heads and eyes, saying, 'Verily this is undoubted truth; it is indeed a great thing that the fire could not burn or destroy it.' They took it thence and with the greatest honour, deposited it among their treasures."

There is a variation of this legend, given by Marco Polo, in which it is possible to trace a Christian explanation of the Zoroastrian ritual of fire-worship. We are told that the Christ-child gave the Kings in return for their gifts a small closed box which they were not to open until they returned to Persia. When they opened it, they were disappointed to find only a small stone; not understanding that this implied that their faith should be as firm as a rock, they threw the stone down a well, when immediately a column of fire ascended to Heaven; and the Wise Men, realizing their mistake, carried some of the fire to their own country and worshipped it. The Kings were buried at Sessania Adnementorum, in Arabia, and the Empress Helena carried their bodies to Constantinople; thence they were carried to Milan, and subsequently Cologne, by the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa.

We learn from Dowden that the Festival of the *Theophany* or the *Epiphany* was, as its name implies, characteristically Eastern in origin, as the Festival of the Nativity was Western, but when it passed

to the West, it was soon separated from the Nativity, and was usually called the "Feast of the Three Kings." It probably made its way to the West, through the Churches of Southern Gaul, whose affinities with the East are recognized. It is mentioned by the historian Marcellinus in his account of the Emperor Julian in A.D. 361, and by A.D. 831 had become a festival, distinct from Christmas.

The figures of the Three Kings lent themselves to popular imagination, and are responsible for much of the picturesque symbolism of the festival, and for mediæval religious dramas, such as the "Feast of the Star," celebrated by Eastern Christians, and thus described:

Three Priests clothed as Kings, with their servants carrying offerings, met before the altar; eventually a procession was formed, and as soon as it commenced to enter the nave, a crown, with a star resembling a cross, was lighted up and pointed out to the "Magi" with the words, "Behold the Star in the East." Two priests drew aside and said, "Behold the Child," and then the offerings were made. At Milan, in 1336, the "Festival of the Three Kings" was celebrated. Three Kings appeared on beautiful horses, a star going before them; they asked Herod where Christ should be born; then they marched to the Church of St. Eustorgius, where they found a manger, and Christ the Babe.

In Poland, an illuminated star is carried round the villages, with three lads to represent the three kings, and others dressed up as birds and animals, in allusion to the worship of the Christ-child by dumb creatures in the manger.

In some English villages, it was once the custom for farmers and their servants to meet on Epiphany Eve, walk to a cornfield and light twelve small fires and one large one, round which they formed a circle, raising a shout which was answered from all the neighbouring fields and villages. The busy housewife was meanwhile at home, preparing a good meal for the men.

After supper, the master took his guests round to the ox-stalls, and there went through the ceremony of pledging the oxen; then joyful songs were sung, and the company separated.

A very ancient custom of Twelfth Night was the electing of kings and queens by beans, observed by rural folk in England and on the continent of Europe. The farmer invited his friends and the labourers to supper, and a huge cake was brought in containing a "bean" and a "pea." The man to whom the slice was allotted containing the bean was king, and the lady who got the pea was queen. The rest were ministers of state and maids of honour. So we have the motto, "*Il a trouvé la fève au gâteau*"—he has found the bean in the cake. The festival was generally held in a large barn decorated with evergreens and

a great bough of mistletoe, and the lines sung commenced:

"Now, now the mirth comes," &c.

The king and queen acted as master and mistress of the ceremonies throughout the evening.

In France, a child would get under the table, and as each piece of the cake was cut, call out the name of the person to whom it was to be given. "*Le Roi des Fèves*," was also identified afterwards with the "King of the Carnival," and descriptions of his office will be found under this heading.

It was usual for the kings of England and of Spain on this day to make personally, or by their chamberlains, offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh at the chief church of the capital.

In the time of Henry VII, we learn from old chroniclers, "On Twelfth Day the king had to go crowned, in his royal robes, kirtle, surtout, his furred hood upon his neck, his mantle with a long train, and his cutlass before him; his armill upon his arm, of gold set full of rich stones; and no temporal man to touch it but the king himself; and the squire for the body must bring it to the king in a fair kerchief, and the king must put it on himself. And he must offer that day gold, myrrh, and frankincense." The only church to-day that gives an echo of the former royal feast is the Chapel Royal, St. James's.

Till the reign of George III, the reigning sovereign attended by the knights and the three great orders, went in state to the Chapel Royal of St. James. When George III, was incapacitated from performing the functions of royalty, the presentation of gold, frankincense and myrrh was done by proxy, and succeeding sovereigns have found it convenient to follow the example. At the service which now takes place at the chapel, when the offertory is being read, two members of the king's household, wearing the royal livery, descend from the royal pew and, preceded by the usher, go to the altar rails. There they present to one of the officiating clergymen a red bag edged with gold lace. This bag is understood to contain the king's offering of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Thus is George V of England confessing faith in the most wonderful and beautiful of all Bible narratives.

EPIPHANY LEGENDS. St. Befana (a corruption of Epiphania) is the good fairy of Italian children. She is supposed to fill their socks and shoes with toys when they go to bed on Twelfth Night. Some one enters the bedroom, and the children cry out "*Ecco la Befana!*" The legend is that Befana was a woman who was too busy with housework to offer hospitality to the Magi Kings, and saying that she would be less busy on their return, continued her duties. The

three kings went away and did not come back, but Befana watches for them every Twelfth Night.

Parents threaten to tell "La Befana" when a child is naughty, so that she shall only bring it ashes instead of toys on the Epiphany.

A variant of this legend obtains among the Russian peasants, who tell of a woman called "the Baboushka" who was invited by the Magi as they passed her cottage, to come with them and worship. She promised to come later; but the kings went their way, and she now searches everywhere for the Christ-child, hoping that every little one to whom she brings gifts on the holy night may be He whom she is seeking.

Spanish children are taught to put out baskets filled with straw and other fodder, so that when "Los Reyes" of the kings pass, they may find food for their camels. In gratitude they leave presents for these thoughtful children.

In the Greek Church, the Feast of Epiphany is a favourite day for baptism, and this fact, with the accompanying ceremony of immersing crosses or images, has given rise to rain-charms. Here is an Epiphany song of Imbros:

"There came 'the day of lights and baptisms.' There came great rejoicings, and Our Lord. Down to the river Jordan went Our Lady the *Panagia*. She took water and washed herself, and with a gold kerchief dried herself; with the gospels in her

arms, and the censer in her hands, and she called on St. John:

'St. John, Lord and forerunner, thou art mighty; thou savest and goest before to baptize the young Christ.'

Wait for the dawn that I may go up into Heaven and may throw down refreshment on the earth, that Our Lord with Our Lady may be refreshed, that the springs and waters may be refreshed, that the flocks may prosper and the idols fall."

The Greek Church holds that the Epiphany or "Theophany," celebrated Christ's baptism by John the Baptist, and also two other events, according to St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome: The miracle of Cana, in turning the water into wine, and the feeding of the five thousand. St. Gregory Nazianzen calls it "This holy day of Lights," and adds it had its original in the baptism of Christ —the True Light, baptism being called by them "light or illumination," from the baptism of the Holy Ghost with fire.

St. Chrysostom says "That in this solemnity in memory of our Saviour's baptism, by which he sanctified the nature of water, they were used at midnights to carry home water from the church, and lay it up, where it would remain as fresh and uncorrupt for one, two, or three years, as if it were immediately drawn out of any fountain."

Another Father of the Church gives this direction "Let servants rest from their labours on Epiphany

because on this day the Divinity of Christ was first declared."

Justinian and the Theodosian code make the feasts of the Nativity and Epiphany days of vacation from all pleadings at law, and in the custom of the Visigoths and Romans, it became the standing rule that the festival should be kept with great veneration, the law-courts not being open for law, nor the theatres for pleasure.

PLOUGH MONDAY. The first Monday after Twelfth Day is so called, and the plough was drawn in procession from door to door, a figure of an old woman accompanying, called a "Bessy"; evidently a remnant of an ancient festival to the mother goddess. There used to be a light called a plough-light maintained in the churches by the husbandmen before the Reformation.

The men accompanying the plough were dressed up in skins, one of them being called the "fool." The animal forms survive in pantomimes to this day.

Plough Monday is a descendant of the Roman feast called *Compitalia*, instituted by Tarquinius Priscus in the month of January and celebrated by servants when their ploughing was over. It is the husbandmen's first ploughing-day, and was called *Plowlick Day* by the husbandmen of Norfolk in old times.

January 21

ST. AGNES. The feast of this Virgin Saint used to be considered a propitious time for trying spells to foreshow the future, especially in relation to love and marriage.

A girl who wished to dream of her future husband would invoke the saint in the following rhyme:

> "Saint Agnes, be a friend to me
> In the gift I ask of thee.
> Let me this night my husband see."

It was necessary on Saint Agnes' Eve to go to bed fasting; to sleep alone; and to tell no one of your purpose. Sometimes more extreme measures to secure the dream would be resorted to. An egg would be filled with salt and eaten before going to bed, after fasting all day. This occasioned a thirst, and the vessel dreamt of in drinking denoted the future husband symbolically; as, for instance, by suggesting one article used in his trade.

Madeline, the heroine of Keats' poem "St. Agnes' Eve," is represented as a devout student of these love-charms:

> "As she had heard old dames full many times declare,
> How upon St. Agnes' Eve young maidens might
> have visions of delight

And soft adoring from their love receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night ;
If ceremonies due they did aright,
As supperless to bed they must retire,
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes, for all that they desire."

And every reader of the poem knows how happily, in her case, the experiment was rewarded, and the hope fulfilled.

The connexion between St. Agnes and fortunate lovers does not, however, come out very plainly in the history of the saint. Her triumphs are the triumphs of chastity over love, unlawful and undesired. A curious Cornish legend relates that she escaped from prison, took ship, and landed at St. Piran Arwothall. The devil dogged her, but she rebuked him, and the large moorstones between St. Piran and St. Agnes in Cornwall, mark the places where the devils were turned into stone by the look of the indignant saint.

Bolster, a Cornish giant, wanted St. Agnes to be his mistress. She pointed out a small hole, and said she would comply when he filled it with his blood. He agreed to this bargain, not knowing that the hole led into the sea, therefore he bled to death, and the saint then pushed him over the cliff. The hole is called "the Wrath's hole" to this day, and the stones about it are coloured with blood-red streaks.

Dowden tells us that by the Synod of Worcester (A.D. 1240) St. Agnes' Day was appointed to be kept as a holiday for women together with three others ; St. Margaret's, St. Lucy's and St. Agatha's.

The actual legend of St. Agnes seems to be that she was a high-born maiden who refused the suit of a Roman noble. His father was Prefect, and condemned her to be exposed in a public place, whereupon a miracle was wrought, and her long hair growing miraculously longer, covered her entirely. She was martyred at the age of thirteen, during the persecution of Diocletian in A.D. 304.

In Rome a picturesque custom exists of bringing at this date two lambs to be blessed in the Church of Sant' Agnese. They are presented at the altar, and sprinkled with Holy Water, and from the wool of these two lambs the Pope's pallium is yearly woven. This is the survival of a former custom which consisted of blessing a flock of sheep in this Church, to sanctify the sheep-folds, and this latter again was a relic of the Roman festival to Pales, god of sheep-folds.

January 25

ST. PAUL'S DAY. On this day, St. Paul's conversion to Christianity is remembered and kept by the church ; but it was also noticed for another reason by many people, as it was a constant belief that the whole weather of the year was set by it.

St. Paul's Day

" Clara dies Pauli bona tempora denotat anni ;
Si nix vel pluvia, designat tempora cara ;
Si fiant nebulæ, pereunt animalia quœque ;
Si fiant venti, designat prælia genti."

And a rough translation of this will be :

" If it is a fine day, the year will be fine ;
If it snows or rains, all will be dear ;
If clouds come, many animals will die ;
If wind comes, there will be war."

In the reign of Philip and Mary it was a day of great processional state, in which, accompanied by the Bishop of London pontifically attired, the clergy and school children marched through the streets, ending up at St. Paul's Cathedral. A buck and a doe were brought to the altar of the cathedral, and received by the dean and chapter, who sent the buck to be baked, fixing the head and horns on a pole before the Cross.

This is supposed to be a survival of a festival to Diana, whose temple was formerly on the site of St. Paul's Cathedral, but as stags' horns were the symbol of the sun, and the Saxons were addicted to sun-worship, it is more than probable the custom had a Saxon origin.

February 1

ST. BRIDGET. (A.D. 523). St. Bridget was an Irish princess, daughter, it is said, of a prince of Ulster. Converted to Christianity, she became the first Irish nun, and built a cell for herself under a large oak. The place of this hermitage was therefore called Kill-Dara (Kildare), or the cell of the oak.

Like the majority of saints who are commemorated at critical periods of the year, St. Bridget has been connected, in popular thought, with weather-lore and agricultural prosperity. Legend says that when, as a girl, she was sent by her mother to get milk to make butter, she gave away all her milking to the poor, but, at her prayer the yield of butter made from the milk brought by the maidens, her companions, was miraculously increased.

Customs connected with her festival agree with this idea of the power of the saint to increase gain and give luck. We have an account of an ancient and curious ceremony, once observed in the Hebrides:

"The mistress and servants of each family take a sheaf of oats and dress it up in woman's apparel; place it in a large basket and lay beside it a wooden club. This they call 'St. Briid's bed;' and raise a shout, three times repeated, 'Briid is come! Briid is welcome!' This is done just before

retiring to rest; and in the morning, when they rise, they look in the hearth-ashes for the 'impression of St. Briid's Club.' To find it is a good omen for the coming year, and its absence, a bad one."

The writer of a recent book on "Ulster Folk-Lore," spent a day in the village of Maghera, county Londonderry; and thus describes a local custom:

"I asked about the rush crosses which are put up in many cottages at Maghera, and was told that on St. Bridget's Eve, January 31, children are sent out to pull rushes, which must not be cut with a knife. When these rushes are brought in, the family gather round the fire and make the crosses, which are sprinkled with holy water. The wife or eldest daughter prepares tea and pancakes, and the plate of pancakes is laid on the top of the rush-crosses. After prayers, the family partake of St. Bridget's supper. The crosses are hung up over doors and beds to bring good luck. At Tobermore, the rush-bringers ask at the door: 'May St. Bridget come in?' And receive the answer, 'She may.'" This was probably, like those before mentioned, a pre-Christian custom, connected perhaps, with the honour paid to a namesake of Bridget's, a demi-goddess of pagan Ireland, and a patroness of the Irish bards. Like countless other observances of the kind, it was adapted by the Christian missionaries.

Another curious custom is still kept up on St. Bridget's Day. The children of the neighbourhood go from door to door carrying a large doll, which they call "St. Bridget's baby," and asking for something "to buy the Saint's candles." Some dim survival, doubtless, of old fire offerings. There is no special festival, but "St. Bridget's Fire" was kept up from pre-Christian times on the site of her convent in Kildare until the year 1220 A.D., when it was suppressed by an order of an Archbishop of Dublin.

In pagan times, "Brighit" was a daughter of the sun. On her altars daily libations of milk were poured, and cattle were sacred to her. She was represented with a child in her arms. Her chief temple was in Kildare, which was served by vestal virgins of noble birth, called "the daughters of fire," and this sacred fire it was their duty to keep up without lapse, and so it occurred that in Christian times when the temple became a convent and her vestals, nuns, they still tended the fire dedicated to the goddess, now confused with her namesake, and canonised as "Saint Bridget."

"The Dandelion is one of the three insignia of 'St. Briget of the Shores,' the other two being the lamb and the oyster-catcher. It is called in Gaelic 'the little flame of God,' and 'St. Bride's forerunner.' St. Bride of the shores wears it at her breast, and the sunlight is said to follow. St. Bride is often referred to as 'Christ's foster-

mother,' or 'St. Bride of the Mantle,' from her having wrapped the Holy Child in her mantle. Her connexion with the sun may be traced to her pre-Christian predecessor, the Sun's daughter, one of the 'Tuatha de Danann.' The word 'briget' is connected with a Sanskrit root 'to increase, to strengthen.' She was the goddess of music, fire and poetry. Also she is protectress of women, keeper of dreams and prophecies, watcher of destinies, guardian of the future."

(J. S. Stephen.)

February 2

CANDLE-MASS: OR FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. This is a festival of Eastern origin called *Hypapante*, and commemorates the presentation of Christ in the temple; it succeeded a festival of Ceres. The use of candles and torches is by some referred to a symbolical setting forth of the words of Simeon, in Luke II, 32, "A light to lighten the Gentiles," and by others to the ceremonial of the Pagan feast.

In pre-Christian Rome, this festival was observed by the carrying of torches and candles in honour of Februa, mother of Mars, while the Greeks held their feast of Ceres, the mother of Proserpina, who on this day is said to have sought her daughter in the lower world with torches.

In Christian times, the consecration of candles and carrying of them in procession has given us the Latin names *candelaria* and *candelcisa*, the French, *chandeleur;* Italian, *candelora*, and German, *lichtmesse*.

The origin of the feast is ascribed by the Venerable Bede to Pope Gelasius (fifth century). Candles which have been blessed by the clergy are distributed to the people at mass; and the ceremonial is particularly impressive at Rome, when the pope officiates and distributes candles to the clergy—cardinals, bishops, canons, priors, abbots, and simple priests.

In pre-Reformation England, the size of these tapers had symbolic meaning, and supernatural virtues ascribed to them, as witness the old English rhyme:

"This done, each man his candle lights,
Where chiefest seemeth he
Whose taper greatest may be seen,
And fortunate to be
Whose candle burneth clear and bright,
A wondrous force and might
Doth in these candles lie, which, if at
Any time they light
They sure believe that neither storm
Nor tempest doth abide,
Nor thunder in the skies be heard,
Nor any devil's spide,
Nor fearful sprites that walk by night,
Nor hurts of frost or hail."

Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary

In Scotland, it was long the custom on Candlemas Day for school-children to make presents of money to their teachers; the boy and girl who gave the most, being called respectively "the king" and "the queen," and the day was also celebrated as a holiday with sports.

There is a superstition that if the Christmas decorations remain in the house after Candlemas Day, ill-luck will come of it. Herrick has preserved this idea, which was still prevalent in his time:

CEREMONIES FOR CANDLEMAS EVE

Down with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletoe;
Instead of holly, now upraise
The greener box (for show).

The holly hitherto did sway,
Let box now domineer,
Until the dancing Easter-Day,
Or Easter's Eve appear.

The youthful box which now hath grace,
Your houses to renew,
Grown old, surrender must his place,
Unto the crispèd yew.

When yew is out, then birch comes in,
And many flowers beside,
Both of a fresh and fragrant kin,
To honour Whitsuntide.

Green rushes then, and sweetest bents,
With cooler oaken boughs,
Come in for comely ornaments,
To re-adorn the house.
Thus times do shift, each thing his turn does hold ;
New things succeed as former things grow old.

He also alludes to this practice in his

CEREMONY UPON CANDLEMAS EVE

Down with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and mistletoe ;
Down with the holly, ivy, all
Wherewith ye dressed the Christmas hall,
That so the superstitious find
No one least branch there left behind ;
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected there, maids, trust to me,
So many goblins you shall see.

Candlemas Day, like New Year's Day, is supposed to have a mystical power over the coming season :

" If Candlemas Day be fair and bright
Winter will have another flight."

Or again, in still stronger language :

" The hind would as lief see his wife on a bier,
As that Candlemas Day should be fair and clear ! "

February (from *februa*) meant the month of purification and regenerative agencies in Roman times, and like the Lent of the Christian Calendar, the period in which the living were made ready for the civil and religious work of the coming year, and in which yearly duties to the dead were paid. The Festival of the *Parentalia* brought all the members of families together, and they had a kind of love-feast. In this connexion it recalls our "mothering-Sunday." (*q.v.*) (W. Warde Fowler.)

February 3

ST. BLAISE. This was once an important rural festival, especially among women, who were accustomed to run into one another's houses with lighted brands, which they flung on the hearth, exclaiming: "St. Blaise for a blaze!"

This fifth-century saint was a Bishop of Dalmatia, and became the patron of Ragusa, the capital of that province. He was believed to cure sore throats, because his own throat was cut with a sword. In Cornwall (where he is said to have landed, and where a little village—St. Blazey—is named after him) he is also invoked against the toothache. He also heals the diseases of cattle, and has power over wild animals.

A very ancient custom in connexion with this saint is still observed on his feast day at St. Mary's Abbey, East Bergholt, which is thus described:

"This custom of the solemn blessing of St. Blaise's water at this monastery (according to the rite given in the Bollandists) is now over 200 years old, having been begun in 1673 when the Princess de Ligne gave the relic of the saint to the community then at Brussels. The water thus blessed is sent to all parts, and is taken as a cure for all diseases connected with the throat, many cures testifying to its efficacy. The water is sent to all who apply, who make a small offering for porterage. The fact that the blessed water can be kept for any length of time and can be used whenever needed makes it more convenient than the blessing with candles."

As St. Blaise was said to have been martyred by having his flesh torn with iron combs, he has become the patron saint of wool-combers, a curious association of ideas, of frequent occurrence in popular fancy.

St. Blaise's Day was kept by women as a holiday, and that under some penalty for breaking the rule. If any woman was found by her neighbours spinning on that day, their privilege was to break the distaff, and, in punning allusion to the saint's name, "make a Blaze of it!"

February 5

ST. AGATHA'S DAY. February 5 is given as the day of the martyrdom of this virgin saint. One

of the tortures to which she was subjected was the cutting off of her breasts. On her festival, at Catania in Sicily her image, representing her carrying her breasts in a dish, is taken in procession. Traces of this festival exist from heathen times, and there seems little doubt that St. Agatha took the place of a Nature goddess, according to the custom of the church, which turned the folk from heathenism, by Christianising heathen customs. The mystic breasts were possibly symbols of the fertility of the earth, and were carried about at the time of the sowing of the seed, to act as a magic charm to the future crops.

According to Catholic tradition, she was martyred in A.D. 251, during the persecution of Decius.

Quintanus, a man of consular dignity, who was determined to secure her estate and person (for she was a princess), imagined he could compass both these ends by means of the Edict of the emperor against the Christians. So he had her apprehended and taken to Catania in Sicily, where she was given to the care of a most infamous woman. Agatha suffered the most terrible assaults and stratagems, but she never flinched in her loyalty to Christ, to whom she had consecrated her soul and body.

She was arraigned again and again before the Tribunal; put to the rack, beaten with stripes, torn with iron hooks and burnt with torches, and mutilated in the manner described above; thrust

into prison, no food or salve for her wounds was allowed her, but St. Peter himself came and acted as her physician. He healed her wounds and gave her courage, filling her dungeon with heavenly light.

Quintanus was unmoved at these miracles. Consumed with rage at the maiden's resistance, he had her rolled over live coals and broken potsherds. She was taken back to the prison and there gave up the ghost.

Agatha's name is inserted in the canon of the mass in the Calendar of Carthage as far back as A.D. 530, and in all the martyrologies of the Greeks and Latins. She is patron saint of Malta. Her veil, taken out of her tomb and preserved at Catania, is believed to be efficacious in staying the eruptions of Mount Etna.

Because of the legend of her martyrdom, St. Agatha is invoked to protect the breasts and to effect their cure when in disease. She is the patroness of nurses, and protector also of valleys. She *protects* from fire; but once fire has *broken out*, St. Florian should be invoked.

February 14

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY. The ceremonies associated with St. Valentine's Day seem to have arisen from those of the Roman *Lupercalia*. The Lupercalia was held on February 15, in honour of the

wolf who suckled the twins. It was celebrated on the Lupercal, a sacred enclosure on the Palatine Hill. The animals sacrificed were dogs and goats. Youths called the *Luperci* stripped themselves naked, and with thongs made of the skins of the animals sacrificed, rushed round the enclosure, striking at all the women who came in their way, and who greatly coveted the castigation, as it was supposed to confer offspring on them.

It seems a far cry from this to the Christian priest who perished in the persecution of the Emperor Claudius II ; being beheaded on February 14, A.D. 270. But Valentine's name has come down to us as the patron saint of all true lovers ; and there is an old Catholic rhyme which exhorts :

> " Bachelors who'd married be
> Ere the Easter candles shine,"

to

> " Make their prayer full lustily
> To the good Saint Valentine."

The same rhyme makes a jesting comparison between the saint and Cupid, to the disparagement of the latter as a matchmaker ; and the Easter candles are obviously intended to supersede the torches burned in Cupid's honour.

The first young man visitor on the morning of St. Valentine's Day was thought to be the one whose love would enrich the following twelve-

month ; but sweethearts were also chosen by lots. This latter custom has certainly a connexion with the " Lottery of Cupid " so famous in the festival of ancient Rome, and modified by young Christian converts, who wrote the names of saints on the lots, and chose their patrons according to the drawing.

Altogether it is clear that the church laid a purifying hand on a ribald festival of love, which she was too wise to abolish entirely, and which has consequently been handed down to us linked with the name of one of her chosen witnesses, who gave up his life for his faith.

There is a superstition that if, on St. Valentine's Day, a single woman goes out of her own house early in the morning and the first person she meets is a woman, she will not be married that year, but if she meets a man she will be married within three months ; thus Robert Herrick :

TO HIS VALENTINE, ON ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

" Oft have I heard both Youths and Virgins say,
Birds choose their mates, and couple, too, this day :
But by their flight I never can divine,
When I shall couple with my Valentine."

And Shakespeare, in the Midsummer Night's Dream :

" Saint Valentine is past ; begin
These wood-birds but to couple now ? "

St. David's Day

Much that has been said of the customs of Candlemas, applies also to those of St. Valentine's Day; for both these February festivals show the influence of their pagan predecessors, celebrated by the Romans in the same month; and no very hard and fast distinction can be made.

The *Lupercalia*, however, seems to have a rather more direct connexion than the *Februata* with St. Valentine's Day; both from the time (the Ides of February) at which it was kept, and the licence of some of its customs.

March 1

ST. DAVID'S DAY. It is said that the daffodil flowers on St. David's Day, and wearing leeks on that day was usual in Wales.

St. David or St. Dewy was born A.D. 446, at Mynwy, afterwards called after him. Legends are related of him from his birth. Before he was born, his father had a dream prophesying his son's saintly character. The vision told him that the prophecy would be confirmed by his finding when he awoke a honeycomb, a fish, and a stag: the first signifying the honeyed speech of the future saint, the second his ascetic life, the third his conquest of the Serpent, the Evil One.

At his baptism, St. David splashed water into the eyes of the blind bishop who was baptizing him, and the bishop received his sight. David lived for

some years on the site of the future Llanthony monastery, his food consisting only of bread, water, and wild leeks, which latter ever after became the emblem of Wales. When he was elevated to the archbishopric, the ground on which he was delivering a discourse, raised itself into a hill, and a white dove settled on his shoulder.

He founded the Abbey of Glastonbury, and subsequently his remains were removed there from Mynwy, or St. David's, where he died in his eighty-second year. Corpse-candles are the omens of coming death in Wales, in answer to a prayer of St. David, who begged that his beloved people might never die unprepared.

March 17

ST. PATRICK'S DAY. ST. PATRICK AND THE SERPENT. This saint cleared Ireland of serpents. It is said that one old serpent resisted, but the saint overcame it by cunning. He made a box and invited the reptile to enter; the latter insisted that it was too small, and the discussion becoming very heated, the serpent got into the box to prove he was right, whereupon St. Patrick slammed the lid, and cast the box into the sea.

The explanation of the legend of the serpent is, that serpent-worship was common in Ireland, but that St. Patrick put an end to it. When the time came for the King of Tara to light the sacred fire

on the Hill of Tara, which was kindled at our Easter, and was the beacon by which other sacred fires were lit, the fire was found to be already kindled, and Patrick confessed that it was he, who thereby commemorated the true Easter festival.

It was Patrick who encountered the Druids at Tara, and abolished their pagan rites. He converted the warrior chiefs and princes, and baptized them, with thousands of their subjects, in the Holy Wells, which still bear that name. It was through the monastic establishments created by him that Glastonbury, Lindisfarne, Ripon and Malmesbury became Christian.

The Shamrock was usually worn by Irishmen in their hats in honour of St. Patrick's Day, and shamrock is still universal as a button-hole—the Irish Guards having been given permission to wear it as a badge. It was formerly called the "Seamroy." It symbolises the cross, and the blessed Trinity, but before the Christian era was the sacred plant of the Druids of Ireland, because its leaves formed a triad. Spenser, writing in 1596, says: "that the Irish on this day when they go to battle, use their swords in making a cross on the earth, as a charm to procure success, and commonly swear by their swords."

The well-known legend of the shamrock connects it definitely with St. Patrick and his teaching. Preaching to the pagan Irish in the open air on the doctrine of the Trinity, he is said to have illustrated

the existence of the Three in One by plucking a shamrock from the grass growing at his feet, and showing it to his congregation. The legend of the shamrock is connected with that of the banishment of the serpent tribe from Ireland, by a tradition that snakes are never seen on trefoil, and that it is a remedy against the stings of snakes and scorpions. The trefoil in Arabia is called shamrakh, and was sacred in Iran as emblematical of the Persian triads. It was, as we have noted, a sacred plant among the Druids, and as three is a mystical number in the Celtic, as in all religions, St. Patrick must have been aware of this fact.

The true history of St. Patrick seems to be that he was born in Scotland, where many places are named after him, was sold in Ireland as a slave, and there learnt the Irish language. He made his escape to the Continent, and was ordained successively deacon, priest and bishop. Pope Celestine sent him back to Ireland to preach the gospel. He was evidently a great traveller, especially in Celtic countries, as innumerable places in Brittany, Cornwall, and Wales, as well as in Scotland and Ireland are named after him. He died according to tradition in A.D. 493, and was buried in the same grave as St. Bridget and St. Columba, according to a distich:

> "*In Burgo Duno, tumulo tumulantuo in uno*
> *Brigida, Patricius, atque Columba pius.*"

that is, at Downpatrick, County Down.

The jawbone of St. Patrick preserved in a silver shrine was greatly in request on occasion of childbirth, and epileptic fits, and as a preservative against the evil eye.

Another great serpent, or perhaps the one mentioned before, was chained by St. Patrick to the bottom of Lough Dilveen, who told him to remain there "till Monday." Every Monday, the serpent is said to call out—"It's a long Monday, St. Patrick!"

Another tradition says that St. Patrick ended his days at Glastonbury, and was buried there. The Chapel of St. Patrick is still existing as part of Glastonbury Abbey. It is said that he found twelve orthodox Catholics in Glastonbury, and presided over them the last years of his life. There is evidence of an Irish pilgrimage to his tomb during the reign of the Saxon King Ine in A.D. 688, when some pilgrims headed by St. Indractus were murdered.

But we must consider that the great anxiety displayed in the Middle Ages to possess the bodies, or at least the relics of saints, accounts for a good many discrepant traditions as to their burial-places.

SHROVE TIDE AND SHROVE TUESDAY. Three festivals in pre-Christian times are responsible for many of the curious customs associated with this period, which is so called from the confession and subsequent shriving of the penitents,

who confessed their sins preparatory to Lent. The bishops specially admonished their flocks in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, to cease all disputes and contentions, and be reconciled to their enemies, before entering on the Holy Season. However, the season was a signal for the people to give themselves up to all sorts of licence before the chance of it was gone.

The period between Epiphany and Ash Wednesday is strictly speaking the Carnival, but Shrove Tuesday is often called " Carnival," or " Farewell to Flesh," (from the Latin roots *carnis* and *vale*).

The Carnival festival must be traced back to Greece, where it survives in primitive forms in the country places still, and is very clearly a reminiscence of Dionysiac rites, as its legendary home is in Thrace, where the god Dionysos was born. On the feast of St. Constantine, priests called *Anastenaria* play the chief part with dancing images of the saints, which, adorned with bells, are first taken to a well and immersed. In the evening, the priests work themselves up into a frenzied dance, and rush about carrying the images through the streets, and they then fly with them over the fields, as if with wings. The following morning a three-year-old bull is sacrificed before them, and a dance is held in the evening.

But the Carnival as we know it, originated in Italy, and many of its ancient usages still exist in the Latin countries.

Shrove Tide and Shrove Tuesday

Shrove Tuesday, in one of its aspects, is the survivor of the festival of *Fornacalia*—Feast of Ovens (*Fornax*), which took place about February 17. It was a movable feast and lasted a week. An offering was made in each household of *far*, flour of the oldest kind of Italian wheat, roasted in the oven, and crushed in the oldest kind of mill, and served after being made into cakes in antique dishes. Then a general offering of similar cakes was made by the whole community.

The chief figure, in the carnivals of France, Italy and Spain, is a burlesque human figure, who after a short career of power and debauchery is publicly killed by steel, by fire, or otherwise, accompanied by the simulated grief or open joy of the populace. This grotesque personage is none other than the direct successor of the old King of the Saturnalia, *Le Roi de la Fève*, *Le Pape des Fous*, *L'Evèque*, or *L'Abbé de la Déraison*, etc. The *Roi de la Fève's* reign lasted twelve days—during these days special ceremonies took place for the prosperity of the coming year, for the year then began in March—the time of Carnival. In the county of Gloucester, the farm servants were wont to meet in a field of corn, and to light twelve fires in succession round the fields, drinking the health of the master and success to the harvest. In Ireland, a sack of oats was placed high, and twelve candles lighted on it as emblems of luck.

The Carnival is thus an old rite of the Saturn

cult order, the god of seeds and plantations. Italian peasants consecrated the months of February and March to the sowing and planting of spring crops, therefore nothing could be more natural than to celebrate the god to whom all these were due. The orgiastic character of the rites is explained by the principle of sympathetic magic. The Festival of Kronia in Greece had similar features—in particular, a cake of twelve protuberances was presented in sacrifice to Kronos.

To return to the Dionysiac mysteries of later times, imported from Greece into Rome. Even the English ceremonies of this day have here and there an echo of the Festival of Bacchus. As late as 1826 the Eton boys recited verses to this god, which they composed in his honour, as the Patron of Poetry, and the best ones were affixed to the doors of the school. Verses were subsequently not confined to the praises of Bacchus.

Shrove Tuesday is the last day of the Carnival, which popularly begins on the Sunday before, and waxes in merriment up to the end.

In Italy, all sorts of abuses reigned formerly on these days, difficult to cope with, especially as the offenders were masked by coverings of fine painted wire, representing a handsome person, covering the whole of the face, or by painted cardboard; and unless one was prepared to risk being stabbed or beaten at the least, it was not safe to meddle with the masked revellers. It is only within the last

fifteen years that anything like order or decency has been kept ; and this is due mainly to the strict law as to having a licence, and never being completely masked. All sorts of feuds were scored off during the Carnival, and even now you are always at the mercy of any practical joker or ill-intentioned person, for any stranger can speak to you, enter your carriage, or ring at your door-bell.

Shrove-Monday, the previous day, was called *Collop Monday*, from the practice of eating collops of dried meat, the clearings of the larder, before the fast began.

In Nuneaton, football is always played on Shrove-Tuesday, and a general holiday observed, as also in several other places.

To eat pancakes on Shrove-Tuesday was a custom in England from time immemorial, and a great bell used to be rung to call the people together to confess their sins, which was called the " Pancake-bell." Cock-fighting and other sports were almost universal on this day, and throwing at a cock, which degenerated into a barbarous and cruel orgy. The apprentices of London ran loose on this day, and in England, as on the Continent, it became a day of unusual licence, though now no longer observed as a holiday.

The throwing of the pancake is still the predominant ceremony at Westminster School. At eleven o'clock, the verger of the Abbey comes out with a silver baton, followed by the cook, who

enters the lower school and tosses the pancake into the upper school. The boy who gets it unbroken, or rather the largest fragment of it, and carries it to the deanery, is given a guinea from the Abbey funds.

"Pancake Day" is still rather notable in the West of England. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch speaks of unforgotten customs when he describes the boys of St. Ives, Scilly, and other places, going about with stones tied to strings, with which they battered the house-doors, with the cry:

"Give me a pancake, now, now, now,
Or I'll knock in your door with a row-tow-tow."

At Polperro the rhyme ran:

"Nicky, Nicky, Nan,
Give me some pancake and then I'll be gone,
But if you give me none,
I'll throw a great stone
And down your door shall come."

And the author of "Cornish Folk-Lore" relates other rough-and-tumble sports. Cock-fighting was a favourite amusement. "At St. Colum there used to be an egg battle in the Dame's School, each egg being hit against the end of another, until the victor's egg remained unbroken."

In some parts of Tuscany, the peasants on the

night of Shrove Tuesday make a circuit of their fields of young wheat. They carry lighted wisps in their hands, and as they walk chant a rhyme which has been translated:

"Corn, corn, don't 'ee blight,
Here come I to give 'ee light;
In the plain
And on the hill
Let every stalk a bushel fill,
A bushel full, a bushel fair,
A little loaf to every ear."

evidently a relic of Saturnalia.

In reference to the "Pancake Bell," or "Shriving Bell," local rhymes were repeated by the peasantry to represent the jingle of the bells—as thus:

"Pancakes and fritters
Say All Saints and St. Peter's.
When will the ball come?
Say the bells of St. Alkumen (Alkmund).
At two they will throw,
Says Saint Werabo (Werburgh).
O very well,
Says little Michael"—

the allusions being to the great football match of the day. This rhyme comes from Derby, but similar jingles are found in Daventry, Northampton, and other places in England.

ASH WEDNESDAY. This day is known as *Caput jejunii*, the first day of Lent, and follows hard on the Shrove Carnival. The origin of its name is well known. The custom of strewing ashes on the head as a sign of penitence was probably introduced by Gregory the Great. The Catholic ceremony is as follows:

Before Mass, the ashes are consecrated on the Altar, sprinkled with Holy Water, and signed three times with the Cross, whilst the priest recites the words: "*Memento quod cines es et in cinerum reverteris.*"

The ashes used on Ash Wednesday ought to be made of the branches of brushwood or palms which have been consecrated the previous year on Palm Sunday. They are cleaned, dried, and sifted for the purpose. After the priest has given absolution to the people, he prays "Vouchsafe (X) to bless and sanctify (X) these ashes (X) that whoever shall sprinkle these ashes upon them for the redemption of their sins, they may obtain health of body and protection of soul." Prayers ended, the priest sprinkles the ashes with Holy Water, censes them thrice with incense, and the people coming to him and kneeling, he puts ashes on their foreheads in the form of a cross, with other ceremonies.

During the Lenten season, and on Ash Wednesday in particular, an absurd custom used to exist in memory of St. Peter and the cock-crowing. "The King's Cock-Crower" used to crow each hour of

the night instead of proclaiming it in the ordinary way of watchmen.

The fast of forty days, which begins on this day, is historically following the precedent of Our Lord's fast in the wilderness. But the forty days was a period sacred among the Jews, witness the fasts of Moses and Elijah, and even in pre-Jewish times, as fasts of forty days were known to have taken place in the spring to Thammuz among the Phœnicians and Babylonians, and in Egypt to Osiris. The actual Christian fast is forty-four days, but it was not till the close of the eleventh century that at the persuasion of Queen Margaret, the Scottish Church fell into line with the rule of most Western Churches, and ordained the extra four days as a fast. As all the Sundays are feasts, there are only thirty-six days of rigid fasting.

There is a custom in Spain of burying a strip of meat, as thin as a sardine, as a reminder of the strictness of the fast. This is called "*Entierro de la Sardine*," the burial of the sardine.*

Ash Wednesday is the day fixed in Spain, in several places, to manufacture an old woman of stucco or cardboard, of frightful aspect, a sceptre in her hand. She has seven legs, representing the seven weeks of Lent; she is called the "Queen of Lent," and carried in procession; at the end of every week one of her legs is cut off, until all are gone; when she is finally burnt on a pyre.

* L. Williams. "Land of the Dons."

MOTHERING SUNDAY; MID-LENT SUNDAY; OR THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT. A name given to the Fourth Sunday in Lent, which frequently falls about the middle of March, and so has retained some of the ceremonies of the Hilaria, a festival held on the Ides of March in honour of Cybele.

Cybele (often called "the Mother of the Gods") was a Phrygian goddess, whose worship, adopted from the East, was imported into Greece and Rome, and was symbolic of the reverence paid to maternity. Cybele was the Universal Mother-Goddess.

One old custom of Mothering Sunday was to attend the Mother Church, instead of the various outlying chapels-of-ease, and to bring the offerings due. It was also expected of lads and lasses away from home, that they would return on that day, and meet under their parents' roof. They usually brought a present, which very often took the form of cakes called "simnel cakes," a custom commemorated by Herrick:

A CEREMONY IN GLOUCESTER

"I'll to thee a Simnel bring,
'Gainst thou go'st a mothering;
So that, when she blesseth thee,
Half that blessing thou'lt give me."

The word *Simnel* has been variously explained.

The most probable derivation is from the Latin; the meaning being fine flour.

It has been thought that these reunions originated from the tone of the Epistle for Mid-Lent Sunday (Gal. iv, 22–31), in which Jerusalem is spoken of as "our Mother." The Introit has also the same idea:

"Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and come together all you that love her." (Isaiah lxvi.)

A chine of pork and a fig pudding were the correct traditional dishes; but in some parts of the country, there was a dish called "Furmety," made of milk and wheat, and served hot with cinnamon, and other spices.

This Sunday is also called *Dominica Refectionis*, or "Refreshment Sunday," from the Gospel which records the feeding of the five thousand; and also it is thought from the Lesson, which relates the feasting of his brethren by Joseph, and his giving "Benjamin's Mess." In allusion to this last incident, it was sometimes the custom among country folk this day, to give the youngest member of the party a more bountiful portion than the rest at table.

On the Fourth Sunday in Lent, in the Palatinate, also in Bavaria, there was a drama annually enacted between two actors, who played the rôles respectively of Winter and Summer. In the countries

which border the Rhine, the representative of Summer, covered with ivy, struggled with that of Winter, dressed in straw or moss, and finally triumphed over him. The latter champion was stripped of his straw, which was torn to pieces and dispersed, while the comrades of the two champions sang a song celebrating the defeat of Winter—then they made a tour of the village with a garland or a branch of a tree, going from house to house and demanding eggs and ham. Sometimes the mimic "Summer" is crowned with flowers, and habited in leaves. In Bavaria "Summer" is dressed in green—"Winter" in furs, with appropriate implements in their hands. Here, after the combat, "Winter" is either thrown into a pond, or chased into the woods with cries and mockeries. In some parts of Bavaria, the youths exchange rhyming couplets of traditional origin. In Lower Austria the same drama is enacted on Shrove Tuesday.

In a town of Brunswick, groups of youths and maidens enact the respective parts. Among the Slavs, the allegory takes a different form. Young girls all in green, escort a Maypole in procession. Two others, one in white, try to prevent its progress. Finally the white girl is chased away, and returns in green, when all dance round the tree.

The ceremony of "cutting an old woman in two" is still practised in Italy, France, and Spain. A repulsive figure of enormous size is dragged through the streets and cut in two to the sound of

pots and pans, cow-bells, and every discordant sound. At Palermo, a real old woman was mounted on a carriage accompanied by two men dressed in the costume of the *Compagnia de' Bianchi*—a religious confraternity. A scaffold was placed in the public square, and two pretended executioners made believe to cut her neck. A stream of blood concealed in a pocket falling to the ground, the old woman pretended to faint. This ceremony is obsolete since 1737. The old woman personified Mid-Lent.

CARLING SUNDAY. This name was once given to the Sunday following Mothering Sunday. The Carlings were beans or peas. In some parts of England and Germany these were flung on the fires, as if in sacrifice, and then eaten. A very old folk-idea connects beans with the souls of the dead; and we have obviously a survival of one of the ancient Festivals of the Dead so frequently observed in spring and autumn.

In the Isle of Ely it was called "Whirling Sunday," and Whirling Cakes were eaten. "Gray peas and butter" were the usual carlings.

But some derive "carling" from "care" or "sorrow," and so the Sunday has obtained its name of Passion Sunday. Here began the latter and sadder portion of Lent, when the images and pictures in the churches were veiled in crape, and various ceremonies recalled the Passion of Christ,

foreshadowing and preparing for the Holy or Great Week, which was ushered in by Palm Sunday.

PALM SUNDAY. The "Great Week" now begins, of the ceremonies and observances of the Passion. The whole period for the next fifteen days was denominated *Pascha.*

It is from Palestine that we get the earliest accounts of the celebration of Palm Sunday. In the *Peregrinatio Silviæ*, an account of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem towards the close of the fourth century, by a Christian lady, a native of Gaul or Spain, the description is given of the procession of palm-bearers on the Sunday of the Great Week. It was also called the "Feast of Palms," in the life of Euthymius, Abbot in Palestine, who died at a very advanced age in A.D. 473. But in the West, the carrying of the palms does not appear before the ninth century. The ceremony of bearing palms was retained in England after the Reformation, and a royal proclamation of 1536 states that:

"On Palme Sunday it shall be declared the bearing of palms reneweth the memory of the receiving of Christ in like manner into Jerusalem before His death," and the people are bidden "to carry their palmes discreetly."

It is a very ancient custom in all countries to carry palms to church, but in Greece the ceremony is very curious. In Samos, the congregation all bring palms, and give them to the priest, who

redistributes them. Then the men strike such women as are with child on the shoulder with these branches, to ensure safe delivery. But it is unlucky for other women to receive blows, for then all their pottery will be broken.

Palm Sunday is a great day for blessing all forms of agriculture. At Rapallo, in Italy, silkworms' eggs are taken to church to be blessed, making silk being the principal industry of Rapallo.

All through England, willow and box have naturally taken the place of palm, and box is used in France, and was even in pre-Christian times, as a charm against lightning. In Lanarkshire, lads walked in procession carrying blossoming willows adorned with daffodil and box, on the previous Saturday.

At one time in the English Church there was a ceremony consisting of an elaborate blessing of the palms by the priests to displace the Devil and his influences. There was also a procession of a wooden ass mounted on wheels, whilst willow was strewed, and this was afterwards gathered and kept as a protection against lightning. Crosses of palm were made and sold to the people as a remedy against disease.

The ceremonies at Rome commence on Palm Sunday, and there are generally ten thousand foreigners in the city. The Pope, borne on his Chair of State, with soldiers presenting arms amid a burst of music, gives his blessing to the multitude, and then proceeds to bless the palms.

Formerly there existed at Caistor, in Lincolnshire, a Palm Sunday custom of a very quaint nature.

A person representing the proprietor of the estate of Broughton, comes into the porch of Caistor Church when the First Lesson is read, and cracks a "gad whip," which he then folds up; at the Second Lesson he comes to the minister with the whip held up, and at the other end a purse of thirty pieces of silver; then he kneels before the minister, waves the whip three times round his head, and retires after the Lesson. The custom ceased in 1845. This was in reference to Judas Iscariot, and the money for our Lord's life.

It has, however, traces of a much more ancient origin. The whip is bound round with pieces of the magic rowan-tree, and is probably connected with the whipping ceremonies, which constantly preceded the sacrifice of a human being, in olden times. (G. L. Gomme.)

March 25

LADY DAY (FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION). The Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) gave great importance and dignity to this festival. It has been variously called by old Catholic writers: "The Conception of Christ," "The Annunciation of the Lord," and "The Beginning of Redemption," and the incident it commemorates has formed the subject of countless masterpieces of art.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY

FRA ANGELICO

Lady Day

Tradition says that at the time of the Annunciation " Mary of Nazareth " was living in her parents' home ; an affianced bride, but in some anxiety and distress at the thought of a marriage which the wish of her parents would force upon her. Obeying an inner Voice from Heaven, she had vowed to remain unwedded ; but her parents had no sons, and Jewish custom had decreed that she and her sister should both be betrothed to young men of the House of David—that is, to kinsmen, for the sake of handing down the family wealth.

Gabriel's salutation not only told Mary that she was permitted to keep the vow she had made, but also assured her that she had not forfeited by that vow the great hope of all women of Israel—to be the mother of the Messiah.

" He looked on thy humility ;
He knew thee, handmaid of thy Lord."
(Aubrey de Verė.)

The Feast of the Annunciation undoubtedly replaced a great festival of Pagan Rome.

The vernal equinox was the starting-point of the Roman year, and rejoicings similar to those of New Year's Day ushered in the spring, and the entrance of the sun into the zodiacal sign, Aries.

An old writer speaks of these rejoicings as taking place on April 1, but as this day is, in the Christian calendar, the Octave of Lady Day, the connexion

presents no difficulty. Moreover, the Pagan festival would be also of a week's duration. The practical joking which has given the name and fame to the first of April, would be particularly suited to a Festival of Spring, and of the reviving energies of nature.

All over the world we get traces of the same sort of licence at this period of the year ; for instance, in the Indian festival of Huli, which is, practically, a Carnival.

The Feast of the Annunciation, with its sobering reminders of the coming of the Sun of Righteousness, was intended as a check upon the popular licentiousness, and, no doubt, was an effectual one. But the Church showed her usual wisdom in tolerating as far as possible the harmless buffoonery of the time. Indeed, she is said to have sanctioned a *Festum Fatuorum*, or Feast of Fools, in which mock bishops, cardinals, etc., went through mock ceremonies for the diversion of the people ; though this may be considered doubtful.

" April Fools' Day," at any rate, is still with us. In Scotland, the fruitless errands on which the practical joker sends his unsuspecting neighbour are called " Hunting the Gowk." A Jewish tradition connects April fooling with " the fool's errand " on which Noah sent the dove to look for dry land before the waters were abated.

Sadder thoughts are suggested by the fancied resemblance traced by devout minds, between such

"fool's errands" and the fruitless journeys of Christ from Pilate to Herod, and Caiaphas, and back to Pilate again; the sinister mockery to which the Great Captive was subjected in the Judgment Hall has also been cited. April 1 often falls in Holy Week, and the association is natural.

The resemblance between "Hunting the Gowk" and the old Roman Festival of Ovens (*Fornacalia*) is described among Shrove-tide customs and need only be mentioned here.

Several writers have remarked on the curious paucity of traditions and customs connected with Lady Day. However, we cull the following:

In Belgium, Lady Day goes by the name of *Notre Dame de la Prospérité*, from a popular belief that all seeds sown on this day are bound to germinate. A clear and starry sky before sunrise is also thought to be a good omen for the year.

An Italian proverb says that a frost on Lady Day will do no harm. On the contrary, a French one predicts great loss to the pastures if it should freeze on that day. It is also said that rain on Lady Day will mean rain on all other feasts of the Blessed Virgin throughout the year.

In Germany, farm-servants leave off burning candles in the evenings on the Feast of the Annunciation, and resume them on St. Michael's Day.

One curious Lady Day custom has been traced in England—the baking of a certain kind of cake

on Lady Day in the town of St. Albans. The origin of this practice is ascribed as follows:

A noble lady with her attendants was travelling on the Great North Road, in pre-Reformation days, and lost her way near the town of St. Albans. Lights in the monastery tower, visible on the hill, brought the party safely to the hospice, and the lady, as a thank-offering, gave a sum of money to provide for a free distribution of cakes, "made in the shape of ladies," every year on Lady Day, to the poor of the neighbourhood. The monks of the Abbey were entrusted with the bequest, and from this it is supposed that the cakes derived their curious name of "Pope Ladies"—a term which could hardly have originated till after the Reformation.

In Rome, the girls come down from the neighbouring hills and meet in the Church of St. Sabina, where they sing unaccompanied hymns to the Virgin with beautiful effect.

The Rev. Thomas Reilly says:

"At Nazareth on the Feast of the Annunciation, there is a procession through the public streets, in which Greek Uniates, Latins, and Maronites participate. It passes from the Franciscan basilica, which is dedicated to the Annunciation, to the so-called workshop of St. Joseph."*

* "How the Blessed Virgin is honoured in her own Land." By the Rev. Thomas Reilly, O.P. Vide "Ave Maria."

Maundy Thursday

MAUNDY THURSDAY. This day was formerly called in England, "Shier" or "Sheer" Thursday, the equivalent of Shrift Thursday, so-called from the practice of men shaving their beards on this day, for grief at the betrayal of our Lord.

The day before Good Friday is called in the Latin, *Dies Mandati*, from the words of Christ to His disciples: "*Mandatum novum do vobis*"; "A new commandment I give unto you."

These words were sung at the ceremony of the feet-washing, much observed of old among the great of the earth, who, in commemoration of Christ's washing His disciples' feet, washed the feet of beggars, and distributed alms to them in baskets; which baskets went by the name of *maunds*, and are by some credited with originating the name of the day. James II was the last English monarch to observe the ceremony, so far as the feet-washing went, but in William III's day, presents of money and food were given.

In Queen Victoria's reign the amount of money given was increased, and consisted, as it does still, of silver coins specially minted, and known as "Maundy Money."

In Rome, the Humility Service is kept up by the Pope. There is a beautiful and elaborate ceremony for blessing the oils and chrism. Bells and musical instruments are silenced till Easter Day.

Sad thoughts have always centred round this

melancholy anniversary. In Germany there is a superstition that sick children die on Maundy Thursday, "that they may sing in the Easter Choir of Heaven."

But in the Early Church, Maundy Thursday was a great day for the re-admission of penitents, who in token of their joy wore sprigs of green herb, and were called "the green ones." So the day itself was christened *Dies Viridium* or "Day of the Green Ones," and the ministers at Mass wore green vestments. In some parts of England the day is called "Kiss Thursday," from the giving of the kiss by Judas.

GOOD FRIDAY. Called in the early Church *The Pasch of the Cross.* On this day all penitents were absolved, and it was kept throughout Europe as a day of fasting and mourning, "the day that the Bridegroom is taken from them," for this is the anniversary of the Crucifixion. It was originally called "Good" to distinguish it from other Fridays, whose luck would be notoriously bad; but this idea has been much obscured, and most people regard Good Friday as a day of very ill-omen.

So the bread baked on Good Friday would be marked by cautious housewives with a cross, "to keep away the Devil," and there is a lingering superstition that a hot-cross bun hung up in a house will ensure against ill-luck till Good Friday comes again.

THE CRUCIFIXION

FRA ANGELICO

Photo Anderson, Rome

The English word "bun" is probably identical with the Greek "boun." It was a ceremonial cake of circular or crescent shape, made of flour and honey, and was offered to Artemis, Isis, and Ashtoreth (*see* Jeremiah xliv, 19). Marked with the cross it gained, of course, a Christian significance and could be lawfully retained in popular Christian custom.

In an old tavern in Chelsea until lately, there was quite a collection of old Good Friday buns kept in a wire basket hanging from the ceiling. One had been added every Good Friday for many years running, to bring good luck to the house. They were black and hard with age and dust.

In some farmhouses the Good Friday cake hung on the rack till next Good Friday, and a little was supposed to be beneficial to sick cows. To preserve friendship, two friends broke a bun within the church doors, and if they kept the halves they could preserve their friendship.

On Good Friday, herb pudding was eaten formerly, in which leaves of the Passion dock appear as an essential element. It was the day for the annual meeting of the witches.

Innumerable other curious customs connect themselves with Good Friday.

Village lads hunted the squirrel, on account of the legend that Judas Iscariot was changed into that animal!

The following is an account of an eye-witness, Mrs. Flinders Petrie:

" At Sta. Croce and other churches in Florence, is an observance on Good Friday of the custom called ' Thrashing Judas Iscariot.' All the boys of the city buy on that morning, long willow rods tied with coloured ribbons, and take them with them to church. At a certain point in the service, they loudly beat the benches with them, and thereby both perform a piece of ceremonial and gratify a boyish instinct at one and the same time ! "

Because the guilty Pilate washed his hands at Christ's trial, one tribe of gypsies will not touch water on that day, and blacksmiths will not handle nails, because by them Christ was attached to the Cross.

Rain caught on Good Friday used to be bottled to keep evil spirits from the house, but its principal use was medicinal. To bathe one's eyes in it was an infallible preservative for the sight, and cured any ailment from which they might be suffering. Eggs laid on Good Friday never got stale, and butter made on that day possessed medicinal properties.

In some parts of Italy, priests and people form " a water-procession " to a neighbouring river or stream.

An old rhyme says :

" If it rains on Good Friday and Easter Day.
There will be lots of good grass, but little good hay."

Of ecclesiastical ceremonies, we may briefly mention the removal of the Sacrament from the high altar, to one called "the Altar of Repose," which was watched for two nights, as the tomb of our Lord was watched by soldiers.

It was an ancient custom of the kings of England to hallow on Good Friday, with great ceremony, certain rings which were worn to prevent the falling-sickness; they were called cramp-rings, and the form of hallowing them is still preserved. The hallowing took place during the Catholic ceremony of the adoration of the Cross; when the king, among the rest of the faithful, went to kiss the rood, on the morning of Good Friday.

In many churches of Italy a figure of Christ on the Cross is carried in procession on Good Friday, then laid on the ground, where the priests and the women kiss its hands and feet devoutly, and offerings are brought, such as corn and eggs. The burial takes place amidst lights, torches, "singing bread,"* and flowers to strew on the grave.

But this realistic ceremony is in some places replaced by the symbolic substitution of the Host consecrated on Maundy Thursday, which is placed on the Altar of Repose, and borne in the Good Friday procession instead of the crucifix.

The writer witnessed this year (1914) some Good Friday and Easter Eve ceremonies at Riva in Austria. On Good Friday at six o'clock P.M., a

* The Wafer of the Sacrament.

procession took place round the town. First came boys, then men, bareheaded, accompanying crucifers in surplices and scarlet cassocks, who each carried at intervals immense crucifixes, or else crosses with the emblems of the passion displayed on them; after these followed the choir in similar surplices and cassocks, singing a minor chant, probably *Stabat Mater;* they were followed by officers of the army in uniform, all bareheaded, and behind them came the military band, playing dirge-like music; then came a troop of priests with acolytes and thurifers, immediately preceding the Host, which was borne under a square canopy by the principal priest, supported by two others—he held it aloft in a monstrance, and the whole crowd bowed the knee or knelt on the ground as it passed. Up to this time, all the processionists were male, but after the Host, followed some hundreds of women, all dressed and veiled in black, each carrying a long torch, or wax candle lighted at the end. By this time, the procession must have numbered some hundreds of people. It was all reverently and solemnly greeted by the crowd. On Saturday morning at ten A.M., guns were fired from the barracks, and all the church bells in the town rang out together to signify the fast was over. In the church, mass was celebrated, and after mass the priests, choir-boys and acolytes all trooped to the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, where a small silver and gilt sarcophagus surmounted by a lamb, had

been erected over the high altar. The altar was draped in white and gold, and had shelves on either side supporting pots of flowers, alternating with coloured crystal globes full of water, behind each of which a light was burning in a silver sconce, which lit up the chapel brilliantly.

The priest ascended a ladder, opened with a key the little sarcophagus, and took out the chalice containing the Host, which had been put there the night before—and descending the ladder took it in procession to the high altar, depositing it in the ciborium.

An eye-witness gives interesting accounts of the dramatic observances of Holy Week in Spain. The religion of the people there is vital and full of incident. The Holy Week processions in Seville are certainly the most elaborate expression of Christian ritual to be found anywhere in the world.

The processions were originally started in the Middle Ages by a number of religious confraternities. There are no less than forty-four of these in Seville alone. Each has a chapel in which the paraphernalia of the processions is kept until required at the festivals.

The most important part of these consists of life-size groups of images, called *pasos*. Many of them are real works of art, being elaborately and artistically carved. They are attired for the procession in costly robes, while the details of the platforms or stages on which they are carried, are

in many cases of real silver; some of the cloaks used are embroidered in gold, and cost as much as £2000.

On Good Friday, processions are formed, each confraternity carrying its *paso*, which is necessarily very heavy. Among the finest subjects presented are those of the Agony in the Garden—Christ bearing the Cross—the Crucifixion—the Descent from the Cross—each occupying itself with a different incident of the passion. These are magnificently sculptured, and many of them date from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A still more wonderful Good Friday procession is held in Murcia, the images used being the work of a famous mediæval sculptor in wood, and each is in the charge of a trade-guild. The Tailors bear the gigantic group of the Last Supper; the Gardeners, that of the Agony in the Garden; the Bakers take up the *paso* of the Kiss of Judas; the Shoemakers, the group of St. John, and so forth. All the bearers are dressed in violet and carry candles and musical instruments. A standard-bearer comes first, accompanied by a group of boys whose duty it is to proclaim to the crowd—"This is done in remembrance of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ"—announced with bells and trumpets. The excellence of the wood-carving, both in execution and design is such, that it is narrated that the sculptor Salzillo created the principal group of the Agony in the Garden from a drawing furnished by

an angel, whom he had received as a poor man for a night's lodging. The details are, of course, of the period when the groups were carved; there is no attempt at an historical rendering of the scenes. But the realism of the figures is so acute, the expression on the faces so wonderful, that they constitute a veritable mute Passion Play.

Miss Amy Urlin reports an account of ceremonies at Toledo:

"On Good Friday, April 9, 1909, at five o'clock P.M., a procession started from a little alley at the side of the Grand Hotel del Lino, immediately under our window, and went slowly through the streets of the town to the strains of solemn music for two hours. All those who took part in it, and all the spectators who lined the way behaved with the utmost reverence.

"I noted down each item in the procession which formed up beneath our balcony and defiled into the street. It was headed by five mounted police; immediately after whom came a cross-bearer, escorted by six black-robed men carrying tapers. These were followed by a party of acolytes, in purple robes; and then, on a platform decked with Mediterranean heath and other flowers, came a crucifix, attended by nine men in the dress of the Brethren of the Misericordia—namely, purple hoods with eyeholes.

"A second platform was borne by six men in purple. Here the crucifix was seen, with figures

of St. Mary and St. John—the effigies, as was the rule throughout, being life-sized.

"After this platform came a band of boys carrying hooks, or forks, with which they clanged on the ground to mark time; and three Brethren of the Misericordia.

"The next platform carried a tableau of the Descent from the Cross. The Blessed Virgin, in a robe of black velvet, was the central figure, and was attended by St. John and the Magdalene, while Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, the one in black brocade, the other in purple, leaned over the arms of the cross, as in the act of taking down the body.

"The bearers of this platform wore purple robes, and after it came a drummer and a horn-player, and three Brethren of the Misericordia.

"On the next platform was displayed an empty cross, and a figure of the Blessed Virgin, with the body, wrapped in lace, resting on her knee.

"After this realistic *Pietà* rode a man in armour. He carried a black banner and was mounted on a white horse with purple and yellow trappings.

"Five men in armour followed, in single file; and then a somewhat larger company, walking two and two.

"On the next platform was a glass coffin containing the sacred body, mournfully watched by St. John and Nicodemus. The bearers in this case wore cassocks and surplices; and a party of seminarists—

some of whom were tonsured—followed with tapers.

"Then, after a black velvet banner, came a crowd of men in ordinary attire, bearing candles, and marching two and two. They were the escort of a cross wreathed with roses, and carried on a platform completely covered with flowers. Before the cross was a kneeling figure of the Blessed Virgin, in black velvet, and on either side burned five candles in transparent holders. The bearers were in ordinary attire, but immediately after the platform came priests in magnificent vestments, and a large troop of soldiers.

"Civic authorities in their robes, and a military band of about forty or fifty persons, in red and blue uniforms, brought up the imposing rear of this impressive procession."

Tradition says that the actual date of the crucifixion was March 25, or Lady Day, and this gave rise to the idea that it was unlucky for Easter to fall on that date. The *Tablet* says:

"In this connexion Father Thurston cites the old English rhyme:

'When Our Lord doth lie in Our Lady's lap
Then, O England, beware of a clap.'

Or as old Fuller has it:

'When Our Lady falls in Our Lord's lap
Then let England beware of mishap.'

"This is generally understood of a conjunction between Easter Day and Lady Day. And he cites the quaint comment of Fuller, who supposes that the verse was devised by Catholics after the Reformation, and portends some vengeance of the Blessed Virgin 'offended with the English for abolishing her adoration.' It seems far more natural to connect the verse with the old belief that March 25 was the actual date of the crucifixion; for this might lead the credulous to expect some portents when Good Friday came on its original day. Father Thurston mercifully forbears to draw the conclusion that England must 'beware of a clap' in the present year of grace. But some nervous people disturbed by the political revolutions in prospect may find this reading of the prophetic rhyme sufficiently alarming."

This passage was written not long before the death of King Edward VII in May 1910, and the coincidence is sufficiently curious. Other instances of this prophecy have been remarked in English history, as having been fulfilled. In the year 1818, Queen Charlotte died. In 1826, great financial distress happened in England, and so forth.

A fragment from Phlegan of Tralles says the greatest solar eclipse known in the world, took place in the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad, night coming on at the sixth hour (or noon). Even the stars appeared, and a great earthquake occurred in Bithynia, overthrowing the city of Nikea. An

astronomical calculation of that year, gives a lunar eclipse on that day, visible at Jerusalem, and the unique combination seems to be alluded to by St. Peter's quotation from Joel (Acts ii, 20).

EASTER DAY OR FESTIVAL OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, was called in the early church *Dominica gaudii*—"The Lord's Day of Joy." Its date was not actually settled until the year 525 A.D. when the Western Church adopted the first Sunday after the first full moon, after the Vernal Equinox, as the date of Easter, but some churches did not fall into line in keeping it, for centuries after. Gregory Nazianzen styles it, "the queen of days, and festival of festivals."

On this greatest of Christian festivals, several survivals occur of ancient heathen ceremonies. To begin with, the name itself is not Christian but pagan. "Ostâra" was the Anglo-Saxon Goddess of Spring. The Latin nations more correctly call the festival *Pascha;* a Greek form of the Jewish Passover. There is a reflection of ancient solar or fire-worship in some well-known Easter ceremonies.

For instance, at Jerusalem, at Easter, the belief is, that in obtaining fresh fire from the Holy Sepulchre, which is supposed to be kindled by a miracle, luck is ensured for the coming year.

"Every year on Easter Saturday a new fire is miraculously kindled at the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. It descends from heaven and ignites

the candle which the patriarch holds in his hand, while with eyes closed he wrestles all night in prayer in the Chapel of the Angel. Worshippers meanwhile wait anxiously in the body of the church, and great are the transports of joy when at one of the windows of the chapel, all dark a minute before, suddenly appears a hand holding a lighted taper."

The crowd eagerly press forward to ignite their tapers at the holy flame.

In old English days on Easter Eve, boys formed a procession carrying rough torches and a little black flag, singing:

"We fasted in the night
For this is the Light"

evidently reminiscent of the old fire ceremonies.

On Holy Saturday in Rome, when a particular passage is read in the gospel for the day, the bells of St. Peter's are rung, the guns are fired from the castle of St. Angelo, and all the bells of the city ring in unison. The most important ceremony of St. Peter's is the blessing of the fire, and the Paschal candle. For this purpose, new fire is employed. At the beginning of Mass, a light from which the candles and the charcoal of the incense is kindled, is struck from a flint in the Sacristy, when the chief Sacristan blesses the water, the fire, and the five grains of incense to be fixed in the Paschal

Photo Alinari

THE RESURRECTION

BAZZI

candlestick. After the service, the cardinal vicar proceeds to bless the water in the baptistry and exorcises it, by means of dipping into it the Paschal candle, and sprinkles the water on the people.

In Florence, there is an Easter custom called the Ceremony of the Car, or *Scoppio del Carro*. A dove ignited at the high altar of the Duomo, flies along a wire out at the western door, and is supposed to ignite the car, signifying the "fruits of the earth." If this is successful, prosperity in the harvest is ensured for the coming year, according to popular belief.

Lambarde gives an account of an Easter play, or puppet-show, as given in Witney, Oxfordshire. "Certain small puppets representing the persons of Christ, the watchman, Mary, and others; amongst others one which bore the part of a waking watchman, who, espying Christ to arise, made a continual noise like to the sound made by the meeting of two sticks, and was therefore commonly called Jack Shacker of Witney."

There are four round churches in England built in imitation of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; these are the Temple Church, London, and those of Cambridge, Northampton, and Little Maplestead in Essex.

The traces of a Paschal candle are observable in some English churches, and the Lychnoscope was for the purpose of watching the light, as some believe.

An Easter candlestick is found in most of the churches of Italy, elaborately carved, to hold the Paschal candle. It stands at the left side, in front of the altar.

Easter Day in olden times was always fourteen days later than it falls in our days, so all signs of fire in the house were put away, the hearth filled with fresh flowers, and the floor covered with fresh green rushes. Although fasting was formally over, precautions were taken not to cease it too suddenly, so flesh meat was forbidden on Easter Day, as it was said to cause fever during the coming year.

Yew was the decoration chosen by Berkly Church near Frome, Somerset, as symbol both of death and of life.

In Submona * (in the Abruzzi) an altar is erected under one of the aqueduct arches by the market-place; and the statue of Christ, having been placed on it, all the statues of the local saints are brought out of the churches and carried round it. Then their bearers run off with them to the Church of the Tomba, whence they fetch, in a great hurry, the statue of the Madonna—to tell her that her son is risen, and to bring the two together.

EASTER SEPULCHRES. In most English churches in country villages, will be found remains

* "In the Abruzzi," by Anne Macdonell.

or indications of what were called Easter Sepulchres. These were Altar Tombs, with sculptured emblems of the Resurrection, or else of the Passion, and were universal in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A mimic show of the Passion and Resurrection took place annually at Eastertide, and "Making the Sepulchre" was a very important rite. It was abolished at the Reformation. It will be seen that the entire ceremony is still kept in the Greek and Latin countries. At the Hof-Kirche in Vienna, the Sepulchre still has an actual military guard.

In old church accounts may be found the charges for the lights and fees for the watchers by the Easter Sepulchres. In certain places there were guilds for the purpose. Naogeorgus says the people used to cast violets and all kinds of sweet flowers on the Sepulchre, while the choir chanted a dirge. Very early on Easter morning in olden times the Cross was removed to its usual place on the altar, and a peculiar ceremony performed called the "Office of the Sepulchre." At Durham a framework with rich hangings of red velvet and gold embroidery was erected on Good Friday, and from it on Easter Day between three and four A.M., two of the most aged monks took a figure of the Risen Saviour holding a Cross, and laying it on a crimson cushion, brought it to the high altar, singing *Christus Resurgens*. Then it was carried to the south choir door, where "four ancient gentlemen held over it a rich canopy of purple velvet, and so

round the church, the choir attending with goodly torches, and great store of other lights, all singing and praising God till they came back again to the high altar."

In an Edwardian inventory of church goods 1550, we find these entries:—"Diverse stayned clothes and stools for the Sepulchre"—"Diverse old stayned and painted clothes for the doeing of Ceremonyes lately used in the Church."

Miss Jane Harrison, in her "Ancient Art and Ritual," calls attention to the practice of the Greek Church of placing, just before Easter, an image of Christ in a tomb, to rise again on Easter morning. This is a departure from the usual objection to the use of images, and represents the pressure of popular feeling. In Megara, near Athens, the folk (especially the women) go out and dance on the hills on Easter Tuesday. Miss Harrison thinks this custom reminiscent of the supposed return of Persephone, who, at a certain place on these hills, was thought to reappear through the earth; called up by the choral dances of her worshippers.

Mr. J. C. Lawson, the author of "Modern Greek Folk-Lore and Ancient Religion," says that he asked an old woman on Easter Eve what was the cause of the anxious gloom of every one's expression; and she answered:—"If Christ does not rise to-morrow, we shall have no corn this year."

Here is a description by the same writer of the way the modern Greeks keep Easter.

"The way in which modern Greeks keep Easter is closely akin to the celebration of the Mysteries.

"They fast during Lent as the *Mystæ* were required to fast; and when Easter comes there is a great reaction. The chief services of Holy Week are on Friday and Saturday nights, when they hold torchlight processions. The following is taken from a description of the keeping of Easter in the island of Thera (Santorin). Fasting is strictly observed until Good Friday night, when a long funeral-drama is performed in the church. A bier with a figure of Christ lies below the chancel-step. After prayers and chants, the figure is kissed by all the women, and the procession moves out to burial, with candles and torches. The Sepulchre is reached by a circuitous route, it being in a vault underneath the church, and the bier is deposited there. Soon after dark on Easter Eve, the same crowd reassembles. When midnight strikes, the veil is drawn away from the vault, and the bier shown to be empty, with only a shroud upon it. Immediately after, a second veil is drawn back, the words ring out 'Christ is risen,' and the figure is seen on the altar steps; from the priests' lighted candle the flame is kindled, and the light is passed from hand to hand. People embrace, saying 'Christ is risen,' and all go home to prepare the lamb, and drink the wine."

A very pretty old English ceremony in Warwickshire, was "clipping the Church"—children joining

their hands round the church so as to form an unbroken circle outside it.

It was an old English belief that the sun danced on Easter Day, which is alluded to in Sir John Suckling's ballad on Lord Orrery's wedding:

> "And oh she dances such a way
> The Sun upon an Easter Day
> Is not so fine a sight!"

Sometimes on Easter morning, the sun was *made* to dance in a pail of water or in a looking-glass.

EASTER EGGS. The custom of giving eggs at Easter is very ancient, and world-wide.

Among the ancient Persians, eggs were given at this time of the year, because of the Vernal Equinox, which *began* the year; and eggs are a natural symbol of new life.

The ritual of Pope Paul V, Christianized the pagan custom, in the prayer that "Thy creature of egg may be a wholesome sustenance to thy faithful servants, eating it in thankfulness, on account of the Resurrection of Our Lord."

Eggs are given on Easter Day, in most countries of Europe. In England, usually, eggs made of chocolate, or fancy eggs filled with sweets or containing some costly trinket, are given. In Russia too, eggs are given. In Hakluyt's "Voyages," 1589, this custom is described:

"Every year against Easter, the Russians dye or colour with Brazil-wood, a great number of eggs, of which every man and woman giveth one unto the priest of the parish, on Easter morning. The common people take red eggs, and the gentlefolks give gilded ones, and they kiss and exchange their eggs."

In some places, hares instead of, or combined with, eggs are given as presents at Easter. This is a survival of the connexion of the hare in Teutonic myths with Eostre, or Ostâra, the Goddess of Dawn and Spring.

"Catching the Hare" was a custom at the festival of the Easter Goddess, Eostre, as the hare was her emblem, just as it was the emblem of Aphrodite in Greece.

"Tansies at Easter" refers to the bitter herbs eaten with the lamb at this season. Brand mentions "playing at handball for a tansy cake" as an Easter diversion. So Herrick says:

"At stool-ball, Lucia, let us play,
For sugar-cakes and wine;
Or for a *tansy* let us pay
The loss, or thine, or mine.

If thou, my dear, a winner be
At trundling of the ball,
The wages thou shalt have, and me
And my misfortunes all.

But if, my sweetest, I shall get,
Then I desire but this,
That likewise I may pay the bet,
And have for all a kiss."

At Thera, in Greece, after the midnight Mass, the fast is broken. Every one exchanges red eggs; the red colour being taken to signify Christ's blood. Two friends meet; one takes the other's egg, strikes it at one end with his own and says, "Christ is risen;" the other does the same with the other egg, and says "Truly He is risen." This is similar to the Russian usage.

In the early church a vigil was kept up all night before Easter Day, and called the Paschal Vigil, and some of the Emperors set up lofty pillars of wax to illuminate the city all night long. Private citizens also set up lamps and torches in front of their houses, and in the churches, which no doubt originated the Paschal candlestick: one idea being that Christ was expected to return in Judgment upon Easter Eve. It is in many countries still spent as a night of watching.

A beautiful ceremony takes place in the Cathedral of Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria.

Just after midnight on Easter morning, a crowd numbering some thousands of the faithful stand torch in hand waiting outside the cathedral, which is pitch dark within; one little window alone bears a flickering light. A long procession of priests in

gorgeous vestments, and monks, and acolytes in red and green, officers in full-dress uniforms, and burghers, files up to the great west door. The patriarch advances and strikes the door with his foot, while a great shout proceeds from the choir behind him—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in!" From the solitary lighted window pipes out the challenge in a treble voice of singular sweetness—"Who is the King of Glory?" And the refrain then alternating for several minutes, the door bursts open, the cathedral becomes a blaze of light, and the procession sweeps in. As many of the congregation as can get in follow it to join in the first Easter service of the day.

A reception follows at the palace attended by the ministry, the diplomatic service, and foreign ambassadors and others. The Prince of Bulgaria gives to his guests the greetings of the season, and two great baskets are brought in containing hundreds of coloured eggs, marked with the crown and royal monogram in gold. All present file past the prince and princess, each guest, in turn, kisses their hands, and takes an egg from each royal personage.

Another long service takes place in the afternoon, at which the gospel is read in thirteen different languages—in reference to the command—"Go ye into all lands and preach the gospel to every creature."

The holiday extends over a full week, its principal amusement being the national dance, the *Choro*, which is danced with vigour by a circle composed half of men and half of women, in separate segments, not alternate, and beginning with a slow movement which gradually quickens in pace.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH. It was the custom in the Early Christian Church to release slaves, and prisoners at Easter, in memory of Christ's descent into Hell, and his preaching to the Spirits in prison. The Emperor Constantine used this day to commemorate the liberality of Christ in dying and rising again, by sending rich gifts to all nations, provinces and people.

The seven days of the Easter festival were employed entirely in prayer and praise, and kneeling and fasting were forbidden as peculiar to Lent, all stood in praise and prayer, and all forms of work or pleasure were strictly prohibited. St. Chrysostom says—" Seven days together ye have preaching, that ye may learn perfectly to wrestle with your enemy." He calls it " a spiritual marriage." The Octave was called " New Sunday," while the newly-baptized wore their white and shining garments, from thence also called *Dominica in albis*, for baptism in the Western Church was most usual in that Octave.

EASTER IN SPAIN. A traveller in Spain says : " The shop windows of confectioners and pastry-

cooks are well worth looking at for some days before Easter. There are displayed all kinds of cakes, but principally those fashioned around eggs. These are either disposed of in the interior of some elaborate farmyard made of pastry, and showing all kinds of creatures, prominence being given to hens, cocks and monkeys. These latter probably only figure there as the name of these confections containing hard-boiled eggs is *Mona*—female monkey. (To digress, any woman or child who is greatly admired, especially if piquante, is called *muy Mona*, and similarly any natty man is *muy Mono*—'very monkeyish.') Every form of ingenuity is exhausted to produce novel *Monas* for Easter presents. Enormous crowds of people saunter out into the country to picnic on dry sausages, cakes and hard-boiled eggs. These latter lead to much fun, and not infrequently to much ill-temper, for the correct thing is to break the shell of the eggs on your neighbour's forehead. If skilfully and quickly done, it does not hurt, but it is very startling to be taken unawares, for the cracking shell shoots a loud report through one's head. Races and scrambles, and all kinds of subterfuges and games are resorted to, to entrap the vigilant person."

It was an ancient custom in Cheshire for the children to go round and beg the neighbours for eggs for their Easter dinner; these were called "Paste Eggs."

In Cumberland and Westmorland the boys

begged for eggs to play with; these eggs were boiled hard and tinted with the juice of herbs, and were, after being played with in the fields like balls, given to the beggars to eat. At Paddington, bread was formerly thrown from the summit of the church steeple to be scrambled for by the people; this custom also took place at Twickenham.

In the city of Durham, and also at Ripon, the custom existed of the men loosing the buckles of the women's shoes on Sunday, and on Monday the women did the same to the men. It was a universal right of both sexes to whomsoever they happened to meet in the street, and the buckles on the shoes could only be redeemed by a present.

At Tideswell, in Derbyshire, there was a practice called "Sugar-cupping," when young men and maidens went to the well with cups, wherein they drew the water and melted sugar in it which they had brought in their pockets; after drinking it they returned home in couples.

Another Easter Monday custom was called "going a pudding-pieing," which prevailed in Kent—all the young people going out for the day to eat "pudding-pies," a sort of cheesecake.

In the eastern counties of England tansy puddings, to imitate the bitter herbs of Passover, were formerly a favourite Easter dish; also a gammon of bacon, to mock the Jewish custom of abstaining from swine's flesh; lamb, from its symbolic significance, and the spiced cakes, commonly known as Easter

cakes, and connected by some with the spices used to embalm Christ's body.

In both Somerset and Dorset the parish clerk used to visit the houses of the chief parishioners with a packet of Easter cakes; one cake for each member of the household.

At Twickenham we hear of two guest cakes, formerly divided in the church, and given out to the young people. In 1645, Parliament altered this, and required that the cakes should become loaves, distributed to the poor. Not to be baulked of a little excitement, the parishioners then arranged to have the loaves thrown from the church-tower, and scrambled for by the recipients.

At Biddenden, Kent, as well as Easter gifts in money to the poor parishioners, six hundred cakes used to be baked and distributed. As these cakes were each stamped with two female figures, a legend arose that they represented the donors—two twin sisters who had been born joined together like the Siamese twins! This was quite apocryphal; and the figures were merely symbolic of the recipients of the gifts, who were to be women, and widows.

In Spain there was an old custom among the country folk of dressing up one of their number in tawdry finery and a tin crown, and calling him an Easter-King.* There is a story of the Emperor

* This was no doubt the King of Saturnalia before referred to under Shrove Tuesday.

Charles V meeting one of these monarchs, and saying jestingly that he was welcome to his office, and would find it an arduous one.

AN EASTER FESTIVAL TO THE DEAD IN RUSSIA. A half-Christian, half-pagan, feast to the dead, occurs at Krasnagorka between Easter and Whitsuntide. It takes place for the most part in the cemeteries.

It begins by a service in church, to which the whole population bring offerings of food; rice, eggs and jam, to be sanctified. These offerings cover the floor of the church, and each basin containing them contains also a lighted wax candle, and on a label the name of the dead person to whom the food is to be offered.

A priest and a deacon stand by and read the names from a list given them. This takes some hours, and afterwards the deacon goes round, censes the food, and makes the sign of the Cross over it all. The Easter hymn *Christos Voskrese iz mertvikh* is sung, and then, after kissing the Cross on the priest's hand, each person takes up his basin, and moves out of church. At the door of the church stand crowds of beggars who demand and receive a liberal toll of the food, and the offerers proceed to the cemeteries. Here they sit round the graves, make communications to their dead laid below, and leave a fair proportion of the food at each grave, more beggars appearing and taking away another

goodly share of it. After the whole ceremony is over, little children search among the graves for the remaining buried eggs; and so the offering to the dead finally regales the living.

There has always been a period in the history of the religions of the past, analogous to our festival of Easter. Those of Osiris among the Egyptians, and Thammuz or Adonis among the Phœnicians and Babylonians, were worships involving the yearly ceremonies which celebrated the death and resurrection of a god. Adonis, as he was called by the Greeks, was slain every year in popular belief, and his consort sought him in the Underworld and brought him back to life, whereby the death of vegetation in winter and its revival in spring was symbolized. His death was mourned by women "weeping for him" (Ezekiel viii, 14); his effigy washed in pure water, anointed with oil, and clad in a red robe, while fumes of incense arose round it. The gardens of Adonis, or pots filled with growing herbs, are still to be seen in remoter parts of Sicily and Bavaria. They flowered for eight days, and were then cast into the sea with the images of the dead God. At the approach of Easter, Sicilian women still sow lentils, canary-seed, and wheat in plates which they keep in the dark, and water every few days; the stalks are tied together with red ribbon and the plates are placed in sepulchres containing images of the dead Christ, just as the gardens of Adonis were placed on the grave in olden

times. This practice is also observed in Corenza, in Calabria, and had evidently a pre-Christian origin.*

The date of the celebration of Easter coincides with the date of the worship of Attis, another deity of vegetation, in Rome, and it is suggested that this date was appropriated expressly by the church for this reason. This date, March 25, was also that of the supposed creation of the world.

A feast of Osiris was held in Upper Egypt, at which pots were offered filled with sand, and barley was planted in them, water was poured over them, and the barley allowed to grow, and these gardens were held to be emblems of the resurrection of Osiris.

This is even more graphically symbolized in the Temple of Isis at Philæ by a sculpture in which stalks of corn are seen sprouting from the dead body of Osiris, which a priest waters from a pitcher in his hand. Here Osiris seems to be a personification of the corn which springs up in the fields after they are fertilized by the great inundation. It corresponds to the Mysteries of Demeter, when a reaped ear of corn was shown to the worshippers as the central mystery of their religion. The giving up of its life by the corn, so that it might by dying bring forth more fruit, is in exact analogy with the saying of St. Paul in Cor. xv, the argument there used being that used by the Egyptians also.

* Adonis, Attis, Osiris. J. G. Frazer.

EASTER-MONDAY AND TUESDAY: HEAVING, OR LIFTING DAYS. The day following Easter Day has some curious Easter customs of its own. Among them is the ceremony of "lifting," whence the day gets the name of Lifting, or Heaving Day, which Sir Ray Lankester thus describes:

"On Easter Monday, two men will join hands so as to form a seat; their companions then 'by right of custom' compel the women they may meet to sit, one after the other, on the improvised throne and be lifted or heaved as high as may be. On Easter Tuesday, the women perform the same rite upon the men. A stranger thus assailed is much disconcerted. The custom is said to be a popular degeneration of the celebration of the Resurrection."

Egg games of all kinds were very popular on Easter Monday, jumping over them backwards without breaking any, being one. Another diversion was "catching the March Hare."

HOCK-OR HOKE-TIDE. This is the Monday and Tuesday following Easter week. A curious custom survives in Hungerford. The young men of the town are licensed by popular usage to stop every woman in the street, and give her a kiss. They can also stop every man and demand a forfeit of an orange or a penny. This took place this year (1914) and the ceremonial rightly commences by a

supper the night before at the "John-o'-Gaunt," where the hero's horn is still kept. Next day the Hocktide Court is elected, and the tything or *tutti* men, who are thus authorized to claim their dues, go round the town, preceded by the crier, blowing the famous horn. The chief constable gives a luncheon, and holds the Sandon Fee Court for regulating cattle on the marsh. Then comes another solemn banquet, when the memory of John o' Gaunt is drunk at midnight.

LOW SUNDAY (THE SUNDAY AFTER EASTER). In the German villages of Moravia, the boys and girls meet together and make a straw puppet, which they call "Death." Decked in all sorts of finery, it is tied to a pole and carried to the nearest hill, with songs. Then it is stripped and thrown down the slope. One of the girls is arrayed in the finery, and the procession goes home. This ceremony is called "Carrying out the Death," and in some parts of Germany it is a custom of Ascensiontide.*

The same writer describes a great wheel of straw, which three horses drag to the summit of a hill. The village boys set the wheel on fire and roll it down the hill, rushing after it to see that it does not meet with some obstacle. In other parts a mannikin is burnt called *la Sorcière*, and disks are thrown into the air off the end of a stick, all lighted.

* Frazer: "The Golden Bough."

The remains of the *Sorcière*, and the disks, are scattered over the fields as calcined ashes.

In other places the lights are first everywhere extinguished, before the fresh fire is lit, preferably with flint and steel. The great Paschal Candle is lit from the new fire, and a bonfire is also lit in front of the church. This is the consecrated flame, branches of oak and beech are passed through it, which they take home to protect the house for the year from fire, thunderstorms and hail. Sometimes an image is burnt called "Judas." In Brazil, guns are fired, fireworks let off and images of Judas hung on trees, which are afterwards burnt.

April 23

ST. GEORGE'S DAY. The legendary St. George of Cappadocia is, by common consent, the Patron Saint of England. His festival is kept on April 23, on which day many enthusiasts are to be seen wearing a red rose in honour of him and of Merrie England.*

The greatest popularity of St. George in England dates from after the Crusades, and about 1344 he was adopted as the Patron Saint of England. But there is a legend to the effect that he appeared to Richard Cœur de Lion before Acre, much for the same purpose as the Angel who was "Captain of

* Curiously, this day was both the birthday and the day of death of William Shakespeare, our national poet.

the Hosts of the Lord" appeared to Joshua before Jericho; and several writers point out that he must have been the Englishman's ideal saint for a long time previous to his formal installation.

He was England's "Military Protector," confirmed in that office by the institution of the Order of the Garter by Edward III, and the dedication to him of the Royal Chapel at Windsor.

Henry V at Agincourt invoked him as "the sign of victory," and this favourite of kings became, as we know, no less the favourite of the people. He was the principal figure in rustic plays and mummeries.

Until recent times, one of the diversions of Christmas in Wiltshire and other English counties was the play of "St. George and Turkey-Snipe"—the latter name, of course, being a corruption of St. George's antagonist, the Turkish knight. The words and the characters of the drama vary considerably according to locality, but the main points are always the same, viz. a Christian knight fights with a Turk, and overcomes him.

The words of the opening of the drama are:

"I am King George, the noble champion bold,
And with my trusty sword I won ten thousand pounds in gold.
It was I that fought the fiery Dragon and brought him to the slaughter,
And by those means I won the King of Egypt's daughter," etc.

St. George, the Turk, and the Dragon are universal characters in this play, in its many versions.

We have seen how the cult of St. George was adopted by the English Crusaders. In Palestine he was said to be seen in every battle on his white horse, leading and encouraging their armies. He was the Patron Saint of the Coptic or Egyptian Christians.

The first Christian Church of St. George was at Zarava, east of Jordan in Hauran, A.D. 514. It contained the inscription, " The assembly of demons has become the house of the Lord," which proves that it was formerly a temple. It was one of the finest in the East. The Moslems allow the Christians to celebrate mass once a year on the tomb of St. George at Lydda, now a mosque. The Moslems also reverence St. George, whom they identify with the prophet Elijah—*el Khuds.*

From the antiquity of some of the churches dedicated to St. George, the Rev. S. Baring-Gould deduces that our patron is *not* the Arian bishop, George of Cappadocia, with whom the historian Gibbon desires to identify him.

The legends of the saint are doubtless unreliable, but that there was such a person as St. George, and that he was worthy of canonization seems fairly certain.

The Greek " Acts of the Saints " says that he was born in Cappadocia (*circum* A.D. 285) that his parents were Christians, and that his father suffered martyrdom.

George entered the army, but in Diocletian's persecution, boldly proclaimed his faith ; and after many miracles which rendered his tortures painless, died serenely and with unchanged courage.

The western version of the legend calls the saint a tribune. He travelled to Libya, and entering a town named Silene, found all its inhabitants in a panic, because of a terrible dragon which constantly visited the town in search of prey. Maidens chosen by lot were sacrificed to the monster, and the lot had fallen on the king's daughter, when St. George came to the rescue, fought with the dragon and reduced him to such meekness that the princess led him into the town on her girdle, like a dog. The whole town was then convinced of the truth of St. George's religion ; and all the inhabitants requested baptism.

This story seems to be a Christian variant of the Perseus and Andromeda legend, which persists in many forms, and is itself a later version of the Babylonian hero-tale of Merodach (the Spirit of Light) who vanquishes Tiamat the Dragon (the Power of Darkness). But the identification of the soldier-martyr with these exploits speaks highly for his reputation. He was evidently exceptionally courageous ; noticeable even in a company where all were faithful to the death.

A curious custom in connexion with St. George's Day was the wearing by men of fashion of a blue coat, in reminiscence it is thought, of the blue mantle worn by the Knights of the Garter.

The flag of St. George, a red cross on a white ground, is the insignia of the Church of England, and should be hoisted on the church tower in every case of great rejoicings, or church festivals.

April 25

ST. MARK'S DAY. The festival of St. Mark, or Marcus, evangelist and martyr, follows hard on the national festival of St. George. The reader need hardly be reminded that St. Mark is the more historical personage of the two. We know little of him, but what we know is not so confused by the accretions of legend.

Mark is not mentioned by name in the Gospel attributed to him, but there is a tradition that he was the young man in the linen cloth who followed Christ after His betrayal in Gethsemane. The incident of this unknown young man (presumably a secret disciple, roused from sleep by the report of the Master's arrest) is only given in St. Mark's Gospel.

In the Acts, St. Mark appears as a companion of St. Paul.

He is mentioned by St. Peter in the First Petrine Epistle; and there is a well-known tradition that he derived the materials for his Gospel from that Apostle.

The traditional date of his martyrdom is that of his festival. He had preached the Faith in Egypt

and Libya, and was Bishop of Alexandria. One Easter, the heathen city was celebrating the Mysteries of Serapis, and special anger being roused against the Christians, the mob seized the Bishop, dragged him to a precipice above the sea, and tore him to pieces.

From Alexandria, as is well known, his relics were removed to Venice, where the matchless cathedral bears his name, and the city itself is called "St. Mark's Rest."

A certain melancholy attaches to the customs of this saint's day. The time of year may partly explain this; at any rate, in agricultural countries. At this season, the festival of the *Robigalia* was held by the Romans. Robigus and Robigo were names given to the god and goddess of Mildew, and sacrifices were made of a sheep and a dog, to preserve the corn from blight. This was succeeded in Christian times by the ceremony of "the Blessing of the Corn."

Processional Litanies which were in use in Rome as a kind of penitential or deprecatory practice, had St. Mark's name attached to them, and spread over Christian Europe.

Clergy and people went out in procession from the churches to the fields, and the Sacrament was carried round the growing crops, to the accompaniment of prayers and hymns.

In England, St. Mark's Feast had another, more sinister ceremony. There was an all-night vigil kept

in the church porch by bold spirits who desired to see the ghosts of those who would die during the ensuing year pass through the porch, in the order of their decease, and enter the church. Other charms, similar to those of Midsummer and Hallows Eve, were practised at this season, and we gather from the attempts made by the parochial clergy in the Middle Ages to keep St. Mark's Day as one of abstinence, that there was a good deal of licence connected with the all-night vigil.

St. Mark's Eve was thought to be a lucky time for taking omens.

As on St. Agnes' Eve, girls tried to discover their future husband, by hanging their smocks before the fire at night, for the wraith of the lover to come and turn them on the other side. Also there was the making of the Dumb Cake (see St. John's Eve).

ROGATION SUNDAY takes place five weeks after Easter, and is therefore movable. It takes its name from *rogare*, to beseech or ask for (the Gospel for the day contains the words: "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full"), and the blessing of God on the crops is its object.

It owes its origin to Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne, A.D. 470, who appointed litanies or rogations to be said. It corresponds to the Roman *Ambarvalia*, May 15, when the victims were first led round Roman territory, then sacrificed for the preservation of the boundaries.

The practice of rogations spread through the whole of Gaul, and was established by the Council of Orleans, A.D. 511. The practice was not re-introduced into Rome until the eighth century, according to some authorities, though it was then universal in England and France.

The revival of Rogation Processions is thus commented on in the *Church Times*, which gives the instances following in this year:

"We have received a number of reports of Rogationtide services, which appear to be happily on the increase. The following will indicate the general bearing of these reports:

"On Rogation Sunday many of the faithful from the Church of the Holy Saviour, Hitchin, went on their way, preceded by crucifer, acolytes, servers, singing boys and men, and vested priests, singing canticles and hymns of blessing and invocation for the fruits of the earth. Five stations were made along the country roads and fields; at each of these were recited a psalm, a collect, and a paternoster, concluding with a hymn and the priest's blessing on the crops that grew, and those who worked, and whose livelihood was gained thereby.

"Again we went forth, through some hundreds of people, on to the main road till we came to the final station at the railway. Once again we paused, this time to pray God's blessing on the railway, and the souls and bodies of those who work and travel thereon. Then again the golden crucifix

went at our head, back to the Church of the Holy Saviour.

"Truly, it was comely to the eye and good to look upon, this Catholic procession as it wended its way through this tiny bit of God's fair garden. The glory of the trees and flowers in their spring apparel, together with the running stream rippling in the sunshine, the white-robed choir and the priestly vestments, formed a picture that will long remain in the memory of the writer."

Another report says:

"For many years past the Rector of Astley has advocated a better observance of Rogationtide, and this year he was approached by the leading farmers, who asked that the old custom might be revived, and so give a greater reality to the harvest thanksgiving. At a meeting of the Church Council it was decided that a procession should be arranged for Rogation Sunday, as being a day on which every one could take part in it.

"The service began with a short office in St. Luke's Church and a short address by the rector explaining the ancient custom and meaning of the service. The procession then formed, headed by the processional cross and the surpliced choir. The Litany was recited as the procession proceeded to Ridley's Cross, where a halt was made, a hymn sung, and prayers made that Almighty God would of His goodness bless the labours of His servants working in co-operation with Him, and grant to them the

kindly fruits of the earth in due season. The procession then passed along to the cross roads at the pound, where another halt was made, a hymn sung, and prayers said. Then the procession, now numbering 200 or more people, went to the parish church, and the service ended with prayers, hymns, and a short address."

At Charlton-on-Otmoor, Oxfordshire, there was a survival within recent memory of the *Agri lustratio.* On the rood-screen of the parish church a cross was placed every year, on May Day, which had been carried in procession round the parish. It was taken off the rood, decorated with fresh flowers, and after the procession, restored to its place. There is here a probable connexion with the Invention of the Cross, celebrated on May 3.

Hooker recommends the retaining of the custom of "Beating the Bounds," with peeled wands, according to Isaak Walton, his biographer. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Laws of Athelstan, Rogation Days were called *Gange Days*, from the ancient custom of *ganging*, or going in procession round the boundaries. The perambulations were attended by many practices which were abolished at the Reformation ; all except the " beating of the bounds," which was retained. That the " beating of the bounds " retained some of its old religious significance, at least, outwardly, may be gathered from Herrick's well-known poem :

" Dearest ! Bury me
Under that holy oak or gospel-tree,
Where, though thou seest not, thou mayest think upon
Me, when thou yearly go'st procession."

The oak to which he alludes would be one of the trees on the route, by which the procession was accustomed to halt, to read the Gospel for the day, or some appropriate passage from Scripture. The " beating of the bounds " was also observed on, or about, Ascension Day, and further allusion to it will be found in the account of that festival.

May 1

MAY DAY: FEAST OF SS. PHILIP AND JAMES. The choice of those saints as patrons of the day seems to indicate a wish to sanctify a festival of universal secular observances.

The Catholic Church has dedicated the month of May to the Blessed Virgin; and therein has shown her wisdom, for this month was full of peculiar and ominous significance for pagan converts, whether Teutonic or Roman.

Some of the popular customs connected with May Eve show the long-surviving influence of the great Druidical Festival of the Sun-God—Baal or Bel, from whom the day gets its Gaelic name of " Beltain."

The druidical year contained, as is well-known, many festivals in honour of the Sun-god, but the propitiatory sacrifices thought to be due to the Sun at this time of year, made the Beltain celebrations particularly important.

In some parts of Scotland and Ireland, we find distinct traces of these propitiatory sacrifices. The village herdsmen gather together on May Eve in a field, or other open space, and cut a square trench in the ground, leaving one turf in the middle. On this turf they make a fire of wood, and cook a large caudle, consisting of butter, eggs, oatmeal and milk. Some of this they first spill on the ground, as in libation, and then divide it among themselves, naming each piece after some good or evil rural genius, or destructive animal, and tossing it over their shoulders with the invocation: "This I give to thee to spare my flock!" The words, of course, are varied to suit the particular influence, or animal, invoked: "O Fox, spare my lambs!" "O Hooded Crow, spare my chickens!" and so on.

When sufficient precautions appear to have been taken, the rest of the caudle is eaten; any residue being buried in the earth, for consumption on the following Sunday.

An even more impressive ceremony is that of "the Black Lot." For this again the herdsmen gather, light the fire of wood, and bake a cake before it. The cake is divided into pieces, one piece being blackened, then all the pieces are put together in a

hat or handkerchief, and the company draw lots. He who draws the blackened piece must leap three times through the fire; a harmless, yet significant reminiscence of the fate of the Baal-victims in the past.

The Romans dedicated the first of May to the goddess Flora, and decorated their houses and door-posts with flowers and foliage. The cheerful memory of this festival long survived in England, and has not even yet entirely died out. Henry VIII and his court joined in the popular celebrations of May Day, riding out to Shooter's Hill and other then rural spots at an early hour of the morning, "to bring home the May," that is, to gather flowers and foliage to trim the Maypole and crown the "May Queen."

The dances round the Maypole were obviously a survival of dances round a sacred tree, in honour of Flora. The Puritans frowned severely on them, and whenever they could, confiscated the poles and burnt them. In 1644, an Act of Parliament decreed the removal of all Maypoles, and a fine of five shillings a week on any parish where a Maypole was erected, until the said pole should be taken down.

At the Restoration the ban on May Day sports was, of course, removed; and the favourite Morris dance—a sort of mumming-play, introducing the characters of Robin Hood, Maid Marion, and the Merry Men—was revived in the villages.

Some writers trace the very widespread connexion

of Robin Hood with May Day sports to the desire to encourage the practice of archery. The players who represented Robin Hood and his companions would have to gain some proficiency in that art, and the spirit of rivalry would be excited in the spectators.

A contributor to the *Bristol Times and Mirror* mentions the following local customs in connexion with the May Day festival:

"Besides the ordinary sports which were common to all parts of the country on this day, there were many customs which were entirely local, such as the carrying of a hobby-horse through the streets of Padstow on May morning. The horse is taken to a place called Traitor's Pool, where it is made to drink, that is, the head is dipped in the water and the spectators sprinkled from it. This curious custom is said to commemorate an event which occurred during the French wars, when a party of the enemy having landed in the bay, catching sight of a band of mummers dressed in red cloaks, mistook them for soldiers, and hastily returning to their boats, sailed away.

"In the village of Nassington, Northamptonshire, there is a large tract of meadow land by the side of the river, upon which the inhabitants have the right of pasturing cows. The pasture season commences on May Day, and on the preceding evening a rail is placed across the entrance, which the cows must jump to get into the pasture. The lads of the

village watch through the night, and at the dawning of May Day, the lasses with their cows being ready, great rivalry takes place as to which cow shall leap the rail first into the meadow. The cow which succeeds in accomplishing this feat is decorated with ribbons and led round the village in the afternoon, while the cow which gets in last, has to carry nettles and thistles as her badge, and the maid who milks her has to bear the jeers of the villagers."

Better known than these, is the custom observed at Oxford of singing a hymn on the morning of May Day on the summit of Magdalen College tower. The choir begin to sing as the clock strikes five. It is thought that this curious ceremony was substituted for a Requiem Mass, said on the same spot, and at the same hour, for the soul of Henry VII.

The importance of the May Queen and May King has dwindled almost to nothing. Its usual survival is in England nowadays the occasional appearance at our doors of small children, clad in tawdry finery, one of whom carries a significant tin cup, and requests us to remember the May Queen.

The King is not quite so important a figure as the Queen, and is not invariably present, presumably because of the known distaste of small boys for "dressing-up," whilst girls of the same age take to it kindly. But the King is really indispensable to the pageant if logically carried out. "The marriage" of a mock King and Queen symbolized the

growth of vegetation and was kept up, to comparatively modern times, in some parts of England and Germany.

Frazer thinks it was symbolical of a Tree-Goddess's marriage with a mortal; such as was the union of Numa with Egeria, and of Diana with the King of the Wood at Nemi (Aricia). The bringing in of the May, and in especial of the tree, which afterwards becomes the Maypole, is an essential of these ceremonies. Games and contests are held, followed by the crowning of the successful competitors. All evidently signifies in a drama the growth of natural forces in spring.

A contest for the kingship took place until lately in Silesia; it usually took the form of climbing the Maypole and bringing down the prize tied to the top, after which the victor was proclaimed King, and his sweetheart, Queen. The youth carrying the May-bush repaired to the ale-house, where dancing and feasting took place. Sometimes it took the form of a race to the Maypole as goal, the victor being crowned King, and borne in procession on his comrades' shoulders.

In Scandinavian countries, in many districts, the battle of the False Odin, who usurped the throne for the seven winter months, with the True Odin, who brought blessings of summer into the world, was celebrated by a mimic fight, succeeded by sacrifices and feasting.

A "May Count," or "May King" was chosen,

generally the best runner or rider in the parish. He was dressed in green, and hung with garlands. He then hid himself in the wood, and all the youths went out to search for him ; when they found him, they put him on horseback and led him with shouts of joy through the village. The May King was allowed a Queen to share his honours in the feast and dance.

The ancient May Day ceremonies are still observed in some villages of South Warwickshire. At Cherrington and Stourton, the Queen of May is represented by a pretty child dressed in white, and wearing a wreath of flowers. She is wheeled in a toy-cart, four boys bearing the Maypole, which is a conical structure encased in five hoops of diminishing size upwards. Flowers are attached to the hoops, the crown imperial being at the top of the centre shaft. The framework bears a resemblance to the old Jack-in-the-Green structure, and probably once concealed a mummer. In Halford, another village of South Warwickshire, the King and Queen march together heading a procession following of two and two, and two boys carry a Maypole of six or seven feet high, hoops adorned with flowers crowning it.

To revert for a moment to the question of May's proverbial ill-luck for weddings. With the ancient Romans, May was a month of ceremonial purification ; and for this reason, no marriages were celebrated in May. Ovid alludes to this super-

stition as current in his time. "The common people," he says, "think it unlucky to marry in May." It was this line of Ovid's in the original Latin, which was written on the piece of paper attached to the gate of Holyrood, in the year of Queen Mary's ill-omened marriage with Bothwell, which took place in May!

On the 9th of the month was held the Roman Festival of the Dead, called the *Lemuralia*. Sacrifices were made to purify each house of hostile ghosts. The curious festival of the *Bona Dea* (also called *Maia*, and identified with *Terra Mater*) celebrated by women, at which no male could be present, was also held in May; and confirmed the idea of the ill-luck of May marriages. For the *Bona Dea* was a deified woman; a chaste matron who had been slain by a suspicious husband, according to later ideas, accounting for the rites.

Of course, the Catholic dedication of May to the Virgin-Mother contains a reminder of purification and the honour due to chastity.

May 3

INVENTION OF THE CROSS. This commemoration is inextricably connected with that of "Holy Cross Day" (September 14), but it would seem to be somewhat the more ancient.

The "Invention" or Finding of the Cross took place, according to the most reliable traditions, in

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VISION OF ST. HELENA

VERONESE

A.D. 326. The circumstances which led to it were as follows:

The Holy Sepulchre had been filled up with rubbish, and the Emperor Hadrian had built a temple to Venus on the site. Constantine wished to build a church there, and his mother Helena, though almost eighty years of age, determined herself to visit the Holy Land, and seek the Cross, concerning which she had had a vision. After diligent search and many difficulties, the aged Empress was rewarded with the discovery of three buried crosses, and that which had borne the Saviour was identified by a miracle—namely, the healing of a sick person who touched it. Some of the True Cross, Helena left at Jerusalem where it was kept in a silver case, and venerated every year by the faithful; some, on her way home she gave to the city of Constantinople, and brought the rest to Rome, where the church of "Santa Croce in Gerusalemme" was built to enshrine it.

According to the Bollandists it was at this church that the commemoration was first observed, but it rapidly grew in popularity, and spread over Western Christendom. Gregory XI ordered a special office for it, and Clement VIII made it "a double of the second class."

The tradition of Helena's British birth gave her finding a special interest for Englishmen.* In the

* She was the daughter of Coel, Duke of Colchester, who afterwards became a king of Britain.

town reputed to be her birthplace, this, the great adventure of her life, has been commemorated in modern times. The new town hall of Colchester is crowned with a gigantic bronze figure of the Empress, holding the Cross, and turning her face towards Jerusalem, *i.e.* towards the south-east, while from olden times the Cross, surmounted by three crowns, forms the arms of Colchester.

CROSS-BEARING PROCESSION OF RONCESVALLES. This takes place every May at the village of Burguets, on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees ; those who join in it wear a black garment, which covers the head and face, all save the eyes, and carry, each, an enormous wooden cross, the size of the one on which Our Lord suffered. The procession begins at early dawn, and according to an eye-witness, is exceedingly impressive. It is of a penitential nature, and the penitents, who often come from great distances, are met by the villagers and by a number of priests. All proceed together, chanting a litany, to the Abbey of Roncesvalles, where mass is said. Afterwards, priests and penitents being left alone, confessions are heard without any unmasking of the penitents. (See Holy Cross Day.)

Those interested in symbolism may see in the ceremonies which glorify the Holy Rood, a substitution of the Christian Tree of Life for that which in pagan times was the central object of the festivities

of May Day. The decorated Maypole in the Middle Ages, undoubtedly succeeded some ancient ceremonial connected with tree-worship.

ASCENSION DAY. The day of our Lord's ascension into Heaven, also called in the Early Church that of His "Assumption," was kept from the first century. On this day the whole of human nature is exalted, therefore called *Episozomene*, as St. Chrysostom in a sermon says, because "We that were unworthy of the earth were this day exalted to Heaven, as all the members of Christ are said in a measure to partake of His glory."

Some popular Ascensiontide customs certainly show the influence of the old Baal festival, held on May 1, or Beltain Eve, and described under that heading.

But the commemoration of the Ascension has a more prominent place in the Christian calendar than that of the saints who have given their names to May Day; and so we find the Ascension customs more definitely Christianized.

The Beating of the Bounds is observed in many places, notably the cities of London and Oxford at Ascensiontide.

The *Church Times* gives the following:

"*BEATING THE BOUNDS.* On Ascension Day the choristers of Lichfield Cathedral observed the old-established custom of 'beating the bounds.'

The houses in the Close were decorated with elm boughs, and after morning service, the choristers, accompanied by the Dean, the Bishop of Stafford, Canons, and the priest-vicars of the Cathedral, each carrying an elm bough, walked round the boundaries of the Close, beating at the eight places where there is a record of there having been, or still is, a well. At each place a portion of Scripture was read, and a verse of a hymn sung. The service concluded around the font in the Cathedral, where further prayers were said, and after all the elm boughs had been laid upon the steps of the font, the Benediction was pronounced." (May 22, 1914.)

Some writers have seen in this practice a moral usefulness. It impressed the boundaries of each man's property on the memory, and illustrated the sin of removing a neighbour's landmark. This may, indeed, partly explain its persistence in communities which had forgotten its origin. It was, of course, a survival of the Roman *Terminalia*—a festival of the god of Boundaries, who was called Terminus, and apparently worshipped under a form resembling a signpost or milestone. It also bears traces of the *Ambarvalia*, which was a religious procession round the fields (see the First Georgic of Virgil). The victims, a bull, a sheep, and a pig, were driven three times round the fields and then sacrificed, with a prayer to Mars to preserve the crops and to bless the household.

We have already spoken of the primitive Christian

custom of blessing the corn (see Rogation Sunday). The connexion is easily traced.

Of local Ascensiontide customs "the Decoration of the Wells" at Tissington, in Derbyshire, is one of the most interesting. The custom is thought to date from a terrible drought of the year 1615, when from March 25 to May 2 no rain fell. But through it all, the wells of Tissington went on flowing, and supplied the need of people who flocked to them for miles around. In thankful memory of this a service was appointed to be held on Ascension Day.

An eye-witness has described the ceremony fully in Chambers' "Book of Days." He says that the wells rather deserve the name of cascades; for the water falls from above, and does not well up from below. Over the stone frontage of these natural springs a wooden scaffolding is erected, and covered with plaster into which flowers are stuck in mosaic-like patterns. The service in the church is succeeded by a procession to the well, in which the parish priest takes part, with parishioners of all ages.

There is a tradition that the well-dressing was once omitted in Puritan days, and that the spring dried up.

At Nantwich we get the local thanksgiving called "the Blessing of the Brine." A very old pit, known as "the old Brine" and probably a famous salt-mine of the past, is (or till recently, was) visited, and hung with garlands, and a dance held

around it. At Gillingham, the lord of the manor is presented on Ascension Day with a yearly tribute of a calf's head, a pair of gloves, and a garland. This custom seems connected with the distance of the water-springs from the town (Shaftesbury) to which the donors belong; that is, it seems like the other well-ceremonies, to be a survival of some kind of propitiatory sacrifice to the Spirit of the Well, dating from pagan times.

An Ascensiontide custom which lingered long in the North country, is that of smock races. The village girls ran races, as the name implies, in their smocks; and the prize was a chemise of fine holland.

We already know that the sun dances on Easter Day when he rises. On the dawn of Ascension Day there is a tradition that the figure of a lamb appears in the East; a symbol of the Lamb exalted into the Heavens.

A more homely superstition tells of the magic properties of an egg laid on Ascension Day. Hung up in the roof, it will preserve the house from ill-luck.

The well-known Venetian custom of wedding the sea with a ring belongs to Ascensiontide. It was on Ascension Day that the Doge went in procession to the seashore and threw in the symbolic ring. Holy water was also cast in.

On Ascension Day, the Cascine Gardens in Florence are full of people picking up *grillos*, or

grasshoppers, and putting them in cages. They are enticed to sing by means of fresh lettuces. If in three days a chirp is heard, the family is sure of good luck, and sets it at liberty. If the grillo dies, the family is despondent.

The Catholic practice of observing Ascension Day as a general holiday lingers on in Protestant, and sceptical, countries.

In Penrhyn Quarries it is usual to knock off work on Ascension Day, from a belief that if work is persisted in, an accident is inevitable.

As for the Italian workman, he refuses to do a stroke of work on Ascension Day; and even those who scoff at religion believe that if any task is done on Ascension Day, the rats will come into the house.

The Feast of the Ascension has the reputation of being the oldest of the Christian Church. It is said to have been kept from A.D. 68. Hospinian says that in the Middle Ages a mimetic representation of it took place, a figure of Christ ascending into Heaven, and one of Satan falling from Heaven, being placed in church on the stage.

MIRACULOUS FOOTPRINTS. The traditional site of the Ascension is, of course, Mount Olivet. The early Christians made pilgrimages thither to kiss the supposed footprints of our Lord on the stone at the top of the mountain.

Josephus says that these footprints survived all the passing and re-passing of the armies of Rome,

and though the pilgrims themselves continually carried away, as sacred mementoes, portions of the sacred earth, the footsteps were still there.

It is said that the Empress Helena wished to have a church built over them, but the paving-stones were disturbed repeatedly. The church at last was built *round* them.

Another legend says that the stone from which the Lord ascended was used to buttress a gate of the Temple, and shared the Temple's fate.*

The element of water is mixed up with many Ascension Day customs. Children were brought to be cured at certain Holy Wells, and rain was caught in basins as it fell, "because Holy Thursday water was Holy Water, and came straight from Heaven." No washing of clothes was allowed, or "one of the family would die"; on the other hand, "Ascension Day rain is good for sore eyes."

WHITSUN DAY AND WHITSUNTIDE. Otherwise called Pentecost; which signifies the period of fifty days elapsing between Easter and Whitsuntide. The whole season is thus commemorative of the post-resurrection period, and has always been kept as a season of holiday. The pagan festivals of the month of May have undoubtedly influenced the Christian festival of Whitsuntide.

In Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* we read that the

* These interesting facts are mentioned by an anonymous writer in the *Ave Maria* for May 1913.

mystical king " had ever a custom that, at the High Feast of Pentecost especially, afore all other high feasts in the year, he would not go that day to meat until he had heard or seen some great adventure or merveile ; and for that custom all manner of strange adventures came before King Arthur at that feast."

The mysterious influence of the month of May, the month sacred to the dead, and in many countries the month of visions and apparitions, and the telling of omens, is here shown in its transition-time, the great feast of Whitsun taking its place, and in many ways retaining its mystical character. The wonderful change in nature at this period, giving birth to the perception of the miraculous anew in men's minds.

Among the Jews, the days between Passover and the Feast of Weeks are observed as a time of mourning. They abstain in the month of Iyar (*i.e.* May) from wedding festivities, and interpret this custom as due to mournful anniversaries in Jewish history, in the time of the Roman wars. But it is impossible to doubt the very much greater antiquity of the idea of a period of gloom, broken by the Pentecostal season. With the Jews Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) is, metaphorically, a harvest feast. It is really so for Jews who still dwell in their own land, and the synagogues everywhere retain the idea ceremonially. Anxiety about the harvest, which still exists in our latitudes, has to be disregarded for

the purposes of ritual. In the same way, the Christian Church now commemorates the Harvest of the Holy Spirit; the in-gathering of His chosen ambassadors, or reapers.

A parallel is also drawn between the Christian and the Jewish commemoration, in that the Feast of Weeks was regarded as the anniversary of the giving of the Law from Sinai.

In the Christian Church, Whitsuntide has been always a very great festival, second only in importance to Easter itself. It is a commemoration of the miraculous gift of tongues and other gifts of the Spirit made on this day to the Apostles, hence it is called by Gregory Nazianzen the "Day of the Holy Ghost." Some think, in addition to the reason given for its name from the white baptismal robes worn by the converts, that the light and *knowledge* diffused on this day caused it to be called Whit-Sunday, or *Wit*-Sunday. Public games and shows were prohibited at this season in the time of the Emperors Justinian and Theodosius. The Acts of the Apostles were commanded to be read in all the churches, as we learn from St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and other authorities. Fasting and kneeling were, as at "Pascha," forbidden, and standing to prayers was the rule during the fifty days of the feast. The custom of singing "Hallelujah" in the hymns of many of the churches was peculiar to this season, but in some churches was extended to other occasions. The hymn *Veni*

Creator Spiritus is one of the oldest hymns known in the Church. Its use can be traced back at least to the tenth century, and at Ordinations and Coronations it was commanded to be sung with lights, vestments, and incense, while bells were rung. It was said: "Whoever repeats this hymn by day or night, no enemy, visible or invisible, shall assail him."

Whitsuntide has the same tradition of the sun's "Dance for Joy" when he rises on the festival morning, though it is not so well-known or so often quoted as the Easter one.

There is also a belief that any prayer offered at sunrise on Whitsun Day will undoubtedly be granted.

In the Primitive Church, Whitsun Eve or vigil was solemnly observed, with rites similar to those of Holy Saturday, or Easter Eve.

One of these was the ceremony of Hallowing the Fonts, which had a special seasonal significance, because Whitsun Day has ever been a favourite time for baptism; and its very name has been said to have originated from the custom of the Early Church of presenting converts for baptism in large numbers at that Feast. These catechumens wore the white baptismal dress; and so the day became Whit—or White—Sunday, according to one derivation, but by some the word Whitsun is said to be a corruption of the word *Pentecost* through the German *Pfingsten*. The colour which is really

the correct one for Whit Sunday is *red*, as representing the tongues of flame which rested on the Apostles' heads, and also because of the saying of St. John Baptist: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with *Fire*." The type of the Holy Spirit is, therefore, flame, which in older religions is the type of life, and sacred accordingly. The Christian festival spiritualizes the great natural festival of new life, which annually takes place at this time, laying stress, however, rather on spiritual than on physical life, though the Holy Ghost originates both, and is designated in the Nicean Creed, "The Lord and Giver of life."

Thus it was that on Whitsun Eve the fonts were blessed with a service in which the great Paschal Candle—called by Eusebius "a pillar of wax"—again reappeared, though it was the custom to take it out of the church after the last service on Ascension Day.

A peculiar efficacy seems to have been attributed by the simple to baptism immediately after this ceremony. At any rate, children were so often left unchristened, waiting for Whitsuntide, that it was found necessary to pass a law that they were to be baptized at any, and all, times of the year.

Among the Flemish peasants there is a custom of planting trees on Whitsun Eve before the doors of their stables and cattle-stalls. Such trees are thought to have a sacred character. So also, in the Ardennes, we have the *Sapins de la Pentecôte.*

A Whitsuntide custom in the parish of Kingsteignton, Devon, dates probably from pre-Christian times. A lamb is drawn about in a cart on Whit Monday, covered with garlands of lilac, laburnum and other flowers, and expenses are asked for. On Whit Tuesday it is killed and roasted whole in the middle of the village. Then it is sold in slices to the poor. It was said that the custom arose as a grateful sacrifice for answer to prayer in a great dearth of water. A river sprang up, and has never since gone dry. It has ever had the name of "Fair Water."

The sacred character attached to wells, springs, and even rain, seems emphasized at the seasons of Ascension and Whitsuntide, just as fire is the chosen emblem for Easter and Midsummer. It seems probable that the necessity of rain in the spring season thus makes itself felt.

In Continental countries many dramatic customs are retained in the services of the day. For instance, in the churches at Messina, great quantities of roses are rained down from the ceiling during the singing of the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus.* This rain of roses superseded the lighted torches which were once used in Rome and elsewhere, in the same way, to symbolize the tongues of fire which dropped down on the Apostles' heads. Probably this earlier custom was attended with danger to the congregations, and the red flowers were substituted as suggestive, harmlessly, of flames.

The sound of "the rushing, mighty wind" was formerly reproduced by the blowing of trumpets; so that the Whitsun Mass in Continental churches must have had, in old times, a dramatic character.

In England the pretty custom of letting free a number of doves from the church roof found great favour. In old St. Paul's, a white pigeon was made to flutter down through an aperture in the roof, together with a great censer full of incense.

In St. Mary, Redcliffe (now part of the city of Bristol, but formerly a village, whose parishioners built their own church—the third finest in England) the aisles were strewn with green rushes on Whitsun Day.

A writer in the *Church Monthly* * mentions the curious Whitsuntide custom at St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, of preaching each year what was called the "Botanical Sermon." An endowment was left for this sermon by a Mr. Thomas Fairchild, a gardener, who decreed that the preacher should treat, on alternate years, of "the Wonderful Works of God in Creation," and of "the Resurrection of the Dead, proved by certain changes in the Animal and Vegetable parts of the Creation."

At St. James', Aldgate, was formerly preached on Whitsun Tuesday a "Flower Sermon." Each member of the congregation wore flowers, and the preacher was presented with a bouquet.

* Mr. John T. Varden.

Nor were more secular sports to celebrate the holiday lacking in mediæval England.

The "Whitsun Ales" are still household words. These were rural drinking-feasts held in every parish, and usually, to the scandal of the Puritans, financed out of parochial funds.

They show the influence of the Maypole revelries, and dancing was a great feature, but recent writers have pointed out that we have no reason to think of them as mere drunken orgies. They were practically guild-feasts, and there was always a collection for the local poor, which took the place in small parishes of poor rates. The parishioners assembled in a large barn, or hall, very often under the squire's auspices and at his expense. Two of their number were elected to act as host and hostess, under the titles of "Lord" and "Lady" of the Ale. It must, of course, be remembered, that the word "Ale" originally used to signify a revel, or a feast of any kind, quite independently of what liquor might be drunk at it, as the word "Bridal," or *Bride Ale* is another instance of the use.

Many local customs are observed in various villages and townships at Whitsuntide. For accounts of the following we are indebted to Mr. John T. Varden, a writer previously quoted:

"At Costessey, near Norwich, what was known as a 'Guild' was held. A 'Mayor,' 'Recorder,' and other officials were sworn into office on May

Day, and on Whitsun Monday went in procession round the village, attended by an 'Orator,' shepherds and shepherdesses mounted on ponies, a snap-dragon and hobby-horse, and, of course, a band of music, rhymed speeches being made by certain of the party wherever a halt was called. In old days a 'Dick Fool' headed the procession, and those composing it claimed the right to go through any house they pleased. Sports and a dance concluded the entertainment, which attracted many from the surrounding district on its revival a few years ago.

"In the 'Boys' Bailiff' procession at Wenlock, in Shropshire, the leading figure was a man in a hair-cloth gown styled the 'Recorder,' who was attended by 'Justices' and other officials, and a bodyguard of boys armed with wooden swords, the weapons being girded on their right side so that they had to be drawn with the left hand.

"At Corby, in Northamptonshire, every twelfth year, the inhabitants used to assemble on Whitsun Monday at a very early hour and stop up all the highways and byways leading into the town, demanding a toll from every person passing through the village. If payment were refused, a stout pole was produced, and the defaulter placed astride on it and carried round the village to the stocks. Tradition asserts that this was in commemoration of a Queen Elizabeth charter making the Corby folk toll-free throughout the country."

To these may be added the ceremony of catching

the lamb, observed at Kidlington, Oxfordshire. Here the girls of the township, with their thumbs tied behind them, attempt to catch a live lamb with their mouths. Whoever succeeds in this race, and is able to hold on to her prey, is called "the Lady of the Lamb," and presides over the feast at which the lamb is the principal dish.

Whitsuntide, like Easter, was a favourite time for the distributing of local charities, left by will to the parish—those quartern loaves, half-crown pieces and stuff cloaks so dear to the generous imagination of the seventeenth and eighteenth century testator.

At St. Briavel's, in Gloucestershire, we get something more original. Each householder contributed a penny, and the churchwardens bought with the total sum bread and cheese, which was distributed in church; a reminiscence, it would seem, of the Early Christian Agapes, or Love-Feasts.

The fact that Whitsun was one of the four Cross-quarter Days accounts for many local usages in England.

*WHITSUN PROCESSION AT ECHTERNACH, IN THE EASTERN ARDENNES.** This ceremony has some curious features. It is said to have originated in a plague which fell, long ago, on the cattle of the neighbourhood. The beasts were taken with a "dancing mania," and danced themselves to death. Hence dancing is the principal

* Macquoid: "In the Ardennes."

feature of the procession; a kind of expiation promised by the peasantry to St. Willibrod, on condition of the saint's intercession.

The respective villages march with their banners early on Whitsun Tuesday to Echternach. On the bridge over the river the procession halts for a sermon, preached by one of the attendant clergy, then moves on towards the church, with its singers, banner-bearers, and more than a hundred musicians, playing the air which is the original of "God Save the King." After them come the dancers—praying aloud as they make the curious step—three steps forward and two back; and holding each other's handkerchiefs to keep the line. Arrived at the church, they dance up to the altar, make their offerings, and dance out again.

TRINITY SUNDAY. This was not a special feast among the Early Christians, because *every* Sunday was by them so dedicated. Durandus says that the Festival of the Holy Trinity was instituted by Gregory IV about A.D. 834.

The Octave of Whitsun Day was formerly called "Festival of the Holy Martyrs." Its observance in special honour of a Mystery of the Christian Faith is by some writers credited in England to Archbishop Becket; but Dom Michael Barrett, O.S.B., says that as early as the eighth century, the learned monk Alcuin had composed a Mass of the Holy Trinity, which was used in some churches,

notably in Germany. In the tenth century a feast of that name was instituted at Liège. Pope John made it universal in the church; and under a later Pontiff it has been raised to the highest rank as a separate festival, independent of Pentecost.

In Protestant countries, too, the tendency is to divorce it from Whitsuntide, and to make it a self-complete commemoration of a Christian dogma.

Keble, in his "Lyra Innocentium" has aptly described the High Anglican view. He discredits the idea of making Whitsuntide the one festival without an octave:

"For each and all the eighth mysterious morn
Doth of the first tell o'er the perfect tale. . . .

For Thy dread hours, Thou awful Trinity,
Are but the Whitsun airs, new set on high."

Perhaps the identification of the day with a dogma, rather than with an event, or a personage, has tended to discourage the growth of folk-lore around it. At any rate, there is a certain dearth of Trinity Sunday customs recorded by English writers.

Brand, however, quotes from a letter, written to Aubrey, the historian of Wilts, in 1682, and describing a curious ceremony of the day at Newnton, North Wilts.

King Athelstan gave to the parish a piece of

common land, and a house for the *hayward*—that is, the feeder of the animals pastured on the common. To commemorate this, the parishioners go every Sunday in procession to the hayward's house, and knock three times in honour of the Trinity. Having been admitted, they call for silence, and read certain prayers; after which, a girl, wearing a garland round the neck, is presented to a youth of another parish, who has formed one of the company. He kisses her three times, in honour of the Holy Trinity; and she, putting the garland round his neck, gives him also three kisses, which are again returned by him, together with the garland. Finally he takes the garland, and gives her a piece of money. This ceremony is observed at each house in the parish—each year at a different house, till the circle is complete. The parishioners contribute meat and drink for a feast on the occasion.

With regard to the sunrise tradition, which would seem to attach itself to holy days, we have this curious Trinity Sunday version from the *Mémoires de l'Académie Celtique*, as current in Old Lorraine:

"Le jour de la Fête de la Trinité, quelques personnes vont de grand matin dans la campagne, pour y voir lever trois soleils a la fois."

"On Trinity Sunday, people go early in the morning into the country, in order to see *three suns rise at the same time*."

In Saxony, the church-altars on Trinity Sunday

are decorated with pansies. The pansy is called the Trinity Flower; partly because it blooms at this time, possibly from its fancied resemblance to "three faces in a hood,"—one of its rural names.

The hymn, *Gloria Patri*, is certainly as old as the second century, as Lucian is said to allude to it in one of his "Dialogues." Another very early Christian hymn was the *Trisagion*, or "Holy, Holy, Holy," which has always been taken to imply the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It was called the "cherubical hymn," from the vision of Isaiah.

CORPUS CHRISTI (*ALSO CALLED CORPUS DOMINI*) was not a festival of the Early Christian Church, but was instituted in the Middle Ages, and was celebrated on the Thursday within the Octave of Trinity Sunday, which it follows in being a movable feast.

Although the Feast of Corpus Christi is no longer kept in England, as the Sacrament is not allowed to be carried in procession through the streets, it is important as indicating the origin of mystery plays and pageants, both of which are now being revived in the England of the present day.

In an old poem, "Naogeorgus," we read of the silver Pyx being borne in procession under a cloth-of-gold canopy, and subjects such as the Passion of Christ, St. Ursula and her maidens, St. George and the Dragon, and the histories of St. Catherine, St. Sebastian, and St. Christopher being enacted

in mystery-dramas for the edification of the populace:

> "The Challis, and the singing-cake
> With Barbara is led,
> And sundry other pageants playde,
> In worship of this Bred."

Various traditions exist as to the origin of this festival of the Roman Church. Urban IV (A.D. 1264) seems only to have extended its observance, which some Catholic writers ascribe to Apostolic times, but Pope Urban's name is always associated with its world-wide fame, for it was in his pontificate that the Miracle of Bolsena occurred.

The story is that a young German priest, named Pietro, had doubts as to the presence of Christ in the Sacrament, and came to Italy, seeking faith. One day, in the town of Bolsena, in the Church of Saint Christina, he was saying his Mass; and in the moment of consecration, saw blood fall from the wafer into the chalice. He hastened to tell the story of the miracle to the pope, then residing at Orvieto. The wondrous wafer was brought thither, and the Cathedral of Orvieto built as its shrine.

Solemn annual processions in honour of the Eucharist became the universal rule, the festival of *Corpus Christi* or Body of Christ becoming one of the most popular of the Middle Ages.

St. Thomas Aquinas drew up an office for the

day, and the progress of the Sacrament through the streets was attended with every possible mark of honour and jubilation. Flowers were strewn before the host, which was borne under a splendid canopy, and surrounded by incense and lights.

In France, the feast is known as the *Fête Dieu.* Its demonstrations were abolished at the Revolution; and again, under the present government, they have been confined to the precincts of the churches, but the devotion still has a strong hold on the populace.

In England, before the Reformation, we have abundant evidence of the popularity of *Corpus Christi.* The city guilds took part in the Corpus Christi celebrations, and in the rules of the Taylors' Guild of Carlisle it is laid down that all the occupation, or members, should assemble in the churchyard of Great St. Mary's, "at the ash-tree," by ten o'clock in the forenoon on Corpus Christi Day, in readiness and full gear for the procession; and whoever is not present "when the banner be raised to come away," is to be fined "VId each offender *toties quoties.*"

Garlands, flags, pack-thread for torches, and fees paid to the torch-bearers for the Corpus Christi procession are mentioned in the churchwardens' accounts of various parishes.

The Guild of Corpus Christi at York, was obliged to perform every year what was known as a Corpus Christi play; a drama usually dealing with some

scriptural subject or religious mystery. It is interesting to note how these plays were apportioned to the various guilds or trade companies. "The Baptism of Christ" was, on one occasion undertaken by the barbers; "The Burial of Christ" by the house-carpenters; "The Offering of Abraham and Isaac" by the slaters, and so on. These plays received the name of *pageants*, from "pagiante," the lofty partitioned cart in which they were represented, and which was drawn under the windows of town-hall or citizen's house, where the audience had assembled.

In one department of the pagiante, made in stages, the players dressed, and in the other they played. The performance of these pageants was a notable part of the Corpus Christi celebrations. In the year of his accession (A.D. 1483), Richard III went to Coventry for Corpus Christi Day "to see the players"; and in 1492 Henry VII and his queen witnessed them, with appreciation.

The custom must have originated at Coventry, since the plays were popularly known as the Coventry plays. Coventry Fair was held on the Friday after Trinity Sunday, and then took place the procession or pageant of Lady Godiva; and a quasi-historical drama celebrated the deliverance of her grateful town. So Coventry was always specially *en fête* for Corpus Christi. There were, however, the famous plays known as the "Chester Mysteries," and the custom was anything but a merely local one.

In Elizabeth's time the plays had declined, together, of course, with the festival. They were still acted, however, when the corporation of a town demanded them. And some memories of Corpus Christi Day lingered on in the most unexpected places. Brand tells of a custom in his time among the Welsh peasantry, of strewing fern on their doorsteps, on the eve of the Thursday after Trinity. And, as late as the year 1830, the Skinners' company of London went in procession on the Thursday after Trinity, from their hall in Dowgate Street to St. Antholin's, Watling Street. They were accompanied by boys from Christ's Hospital School, and by girls strewing herbs.

In Spain and Italy, of course, the feast continued to be kept with its old splendours. When the Earl of Nottingham of James I's time went as Ambassador to Spain, he saw a very elaborate Corpus Christi procession, wherein the king took part and was attended, apparently, by persons dressed as the twelve Apostles, and by "eight giants, four men and four women, the chief being called Gog-Magog."

Modern processions are also as elaborate as circumstances allow.

In Perugia, the whole population are in gala array. They assemble at the cathedral, and there is a procession round the Duomo of choir-boys, seminarists, chapter-members and priests, bearing jewelled crosses, &c. In the afternoon there is a carnival of flowers.

At Pienza, an eye-witness says :—" Every window on the way hung out a silken banner or lace-edged counterpane." On very broken window-ledges were often the finest cloths, and the pavements were carpeted with broom and poppy.

In a little church among the Tuscan hills, there was no less pomp. At the head of the procession came a man in a blue ephod, strewing olive leaves and broom ; then children dressed as angels ; veiled girls, matrons and aged women, followed by the choir and the band. Lastly came the Host, borne by the aged parish priest, under the customary baldachino or canopy. At evening, the procession went down the hill " to offer flowers and pray at the Madonna's shrine, that she too might have a share." *

CORPUS CHRISTI IN MODERN SPAIN. A traveller of our own days says :

" There are a few cities in Spain where the Corpus fête is maintained with something of the old gaiety and splendour." The clergy in Spain lament the decay of the more popular features of the festival. The ecclesiastical Toledo, seat of the Primate of all Spain, still observes Corpus Christi as a high solemnity. . . . " All the church-bells chime, and the host is carried in the splendid ' custodia,' of jewelled filagree gold, which is called ' the most beautiful piece of plate in the world.'

* " Tuscan Feasts and Tuscan Friends," by D. N. Lees.

It is preceded by a bevy of lovely children not dressed as at Granada, to represent angels, but as knights of chivalry . . . then follow ranks of taper-bearing soldiers. . . . A gorgeous group in wine-coloured costume carry great silver maces before the civic representation."*

In Valencia, as in the procession of Holy Week in Seville, "On litters strewn with flowers and thickset with candlelight, are borne carved groups of sacred figures and richly attired images of Christ and the Madonna."

In Granada, the festivities extend over eleven days, and include infantry and cavalry reviews, open-air Masses, claustral processions, and parades of giants and dwarfs. Elsewhere are bull-fights, balloon-ascents, gipsy dances, and fireworks.

In Andalusia, they have a verse about Corpus Christi which has been thus translated:

"Thursdays three in the year there be
That shine more bright than the sun's own ray,
Holy Thursday, Corpus Christi,
And Our Lord's Ascension Day."

The following observances of Corpus Christi in this year (1914) are interesting:

A VILLAGE CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION IN BAVARIA. "The three greatest celebrations of the festival of Corpus Domini are

* "Spanish Highways and Byeways," by K. L. Bates.

in the cities of Vienna, Antwerp and Munich, where noble treasures are preserved in the churches. But the eye of the traveller by train, on the morning of the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, especially if he is coming up, let us say, by the Brenner Pass from Italy into Tirol and Bavaria, is sure to be caught and fascinated by picturesque open-air processions in village after village. In the middle of the magnificent scenery of the Bavarian Highlands spreads the large and lovely village of Garmisch. Its Corpus Christi celebration is a typical village one.

On Wednesday evening after benediction, guns began firing, and the route along which the procession was to pass was strewn with grass and lined with boughs of greenery, the interior of the new church, a fine *rococo* edifice, being also decorated in the same way. Strewing churches with herbs was a custom which was not uncommon in England as late as the Stuart era, and the quadrangle at Magdalen College, Oxford, where the St. John's Day open-air sermon has lately been revived used to be littered with rushes, to represent the preaching of the Baptist in the wilderness. Confessions before the festival of the Holy Sacrament were heard overnight and soon after dawn. Then followed a Low Mass, after which High Mass (with sermon) was sung at half-past seven, and the procession began to be marshalled an hour later. Not the least interesting feature of such an occasion is the

general use of the national dress by the onlooking crowd, at any rate by the women. The girls appear in bright silk attire, open corsets covered with chains and coins, and pretty early Victorian hats, trimmed with flowers and silver braid, while the older women have on their heads either embroidered silk kerchiefs or—more delightful still—tall " busbies " of rich fur, usually a bequest from an earlier generation. Beautiful brocaded shawls are also worn. The women and girls taking part in the procession wore wreaths of white flowers instead of other head-covering. Some were in white—the " Children of Mary," the maidens carrying a robed figure representing the *Virgo Immaculata*, and others—while the married women, who bore the representation of Our Lady of Sorrows, wore blue dresses. The figure of a child praying was carried by the Innocents, other representations being an angel-figure in white and gold, a gorgeous Virgin enthroned, and, of course, the Sacred Form upon the Cross. Finally all knelt as the Holy Sacrament, the pledge of God's presence with His redeemed, came near, borne under a canopy, by the parish priest attended by ten other sacred ministers, clerks, acolytes, and torch-bearers. Behind walked several naval officers in full uniform, followed by an immense number of men singing the Rosary. Two bands accompanied the procession. At certain stations on the route was placed an altar, at which a halt was made for prayers and benediction with

the blessed Sacrament. One of these stations was at a Gasthaus or inn." (*Church Times.*)

June 24

NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST: COMMONLY CALLED MIDSUMMER DAY. In the opinion of some antiquaries, the old rites due to the Sun-god, have been divided between this day and that of *Corpus Christi.*

St. John the Baptist is the only saint in the Calendar whose festival commemorates his birth, instead of his death. The well-known explanation of this is the manner of his birth, divinely foretold. For other saints and martyrs it was the day of their death, which was symbolically called their birth-day—into a higher life (*Natalitia*).

The Scripture account of St. John the Baptist is brief; tradition has supplied more details. His childhood is said to have been marked with tragedy. His father Zacharias, refusing to betray the wondrous child to the jealousy of Herod, was murdered in the temple, and Elizabeth, fleeing into the desert with the young John, herself died after forty days. Her son remained in the desert, and was supernaturally nourished by an angel, "until the time of his showing unto Israel."

Christian art represents him carrying a small banner on a pole, with the inscription *Ecce Agnus Dei.* In further allusion to his own words of

salutation to Christ, he is often accompanied by a lamb.

The murderers of the saint are said to have died miserably. Herod and Herodias were certainly banished to Gaul; and there is a legend that Salome was drowned in crossing ice, and in such a manner that the ice decapitated her.

The relics of St. John are in various places. Theodosius built a church to enshrine some of them at Alexandria.

The baptistery at Florence is dedicated to St. John and here every native child born in Florence is brought for baptism. The head of the Baptist is said to be at Constantinople, but part of it is claimed by St. Sylvester's at Rome.

As Christianity spread over Europe, the Feast of St. John the Baptist superseded the great Baal-Feast of the summer solstice; and the midsummer bonfires received the name of St. John's Fires. We have a long account of how these bonfires were made—one of bones only, another of leaves only, and a third of bones and leaves mixed; the origin of the word *bonfire* being *bonefire*. From this seems to have arisen a tradition that St. John's bones were burnt by the Emperor Julian, and metaphorical use has even been made of the custom by dwelling on the baptist's "*burning* love and charity," symbolized by the fire, and on his fame as the forerunner of Christ, seen from afar, like a beacon flame.

Allegorists also read an allusion to the feast of

midsummer into St. John's own recorded words —"He (Christ) must increase, and I must decrease!" As the summer solstice marks the longest day in the year, just as Christmas does the shortest.

The festival certainly needed all the Christianizing associations available; particularly among the Teutonic peoples, with whom the rites of the Sun-festival had been especially savage. The altar-stone of such "Sun-temples" as Stonehenge was, for instance, at the moment of sunrise on midsummer day stained with the blood of the victims, demanded by the conquering sun, at the zenith of his strength. And the bonfires themselves must have been often fed with human sacrifices—a shadow of the hideous truth being observed till quite lately in Ireland and the Celtic parts of Great Britain, in the playful leaping through the flames, as if in self-dedication.

In Cornwall, there was a case of animal sacrifice as late as the year 1800, when a farmer burnt alive his finest calf. The intense belief in the efficacy of these sacrifices lingers on in the quaint tradition that the ashes of St. John's fires sprinkled on the fields will give fertility.

The feast of midsummer in Ancient Rome was connected with the worship of the Goddess of Fortune (*Fors Fortuna*) whom the great Celtic scholar Gaidoz conjectures to have been a sort of female double of the sun. She was worshipped under the same emblem—that of a wheel. Max

Müller thought the name *Fortuna* was derived from a word meaning "the bright light of every day." Fortuna was specially worshipped by matrons, because she presided over child-birth and destined the "fortune" of each child. There is nothing incredible in the idea that the day of the summer solstice should also be a critical day, with a presiding deity able to grant good fortune to her worshippers, especially to those born on this day. The power of Fortuna as deity of chance, would be as important for the perils of harvest, as those of child-birth. Hence her symbol. Wheels played a part in the midsummer celebrations in Europe till quite recent times. Wooden wheels made purposely for the occasion would be set on fire by means of straw or torches attached to them, and rolled down hill, sometimes into a river or spring; in which case, their continuing to burn when in the water, was taken as a good omen for the vintage, or harvest.

At Brest, torches were whirled round to look like wheels.

In Ireland, wheel-shaped cakes seem to have been rolled through the bonfires.

This symbolism is clear and simple, and, of course, the rolling of the wheel *down* hill indicated the descent of the Sun-god, who, like St. John, would now begin to decrease in power.

Mr. Warde-Fowler thinks the dedication of the Temple of Fortune took place on St. John's Eve, the favourite day among the Italian peasantry for

divination. The Abruzzesi put basins of water filled with sweet herbs on their window-sills, and in the morning bathe their hands and face. The children in one village go and bathe, crowned with flowers, in the river, returning in procession. These and other ceremonies with water, seem to symbolize the marriage of the water and the sun, and we may here mention the very plausible idea that the part played by water—by springs and rivers influenced by the sun—in all solstice ceremonies, determined the choice of the patron-saint of the solstice. It would fitly be he who baptized with water, and sanctified the natural element to "a mystical washing away of sin." Other customs in the Abruzzi for the day of San Giovanni are bathing in the Adriatic before dawn, or going out in boats to greet the sunrise, and feasting afterwards on the shore.

Herbs gathered on St. John's Eve are thought, here as elsewhere, to have special virtues;* as has the washing in dew, early on the feast day; or at seven fountains: (this special significance of seven also applies to the bonfires, which, strictly speaking, should be seven in number).

The connexion of Fortuna with happy motherhood may be partly responsible for the fame of St. John's Eve for all kinds of love-spells. Only partly; for the association of love with summer is as old as the sun itself, and that one of the most

* Foremost among these were *Vervain, Trefoil, St. John's Wort.*

ascetic saints of the Calendar has been pressed into the service of maidens who desire to know the name of their future husbands, sufficiently shows the force of the idea.

At St. Jean du Doigt in Brittany, girls must dance round nine of the St. John's bonfires, or die unwed.

San Giovanni tells the Carrara maiden what sort of *Sposo* she will have by this means:—On the eve of the feast she takes three beans. One she shells, the second she divests of half its skin, the third is left entire. Shaking them with eyes tight shut, she places them in a piece of paper under her pillow. In the morning, with eyes tight shut, she takes out one at random. If it is the "naked bean," she is condemned to marry a very poor man; if it is the bean with half a shell, he will be a fairly well-to-do artisan; if it is the whole bean, she claps her hands, for he will be very rich.

Southern Europe has by no means the monopoly of such love-spells, which were much practised by English peasants before the Reformation, and here and there, in unsophisticated communities, linger on.

The Orpine (sometimes called Midsummer Men) the red flowers of which bloom at this time, was much reverenced for its mystical power of foretelling. By the drooping or spreading of its leaves, the faith or treachery of the lover could be ascertained; at least on St. John's Eve, when a girl often placed it in her bedroom.

A rose plucked on St. John's Eve would thus discover the future husband. Laid aside till Christmas Eve, it had then to be worn; and the first man who enquired the reason for wearing a faded rose, would be the wearer's life-partner.

As on St. Mark's and Hallow's Eves, it was usual to go through the ceremony known as making the dumb cake. A girl writing in the seventeenth century says: "Two must make it, two bake it, two break it in absolute silence, and a third put it under the pillows of all three." It was certain to produce dreams of the future lover.

Another rather less known charm consisted in putting a lump of lead or pewter in the left stocking, sleeping upon it on Midsummer Eve night, and melting it in the morning. In this state, it had to be poured into a pan of water *on which the sun's rays shone direct;* and the shape it assumed was emblematical of the future husband's trade—perhaps of some instrument he would use.

From North Ireland comes a recipe for husband-finding which is rather more eerie. An Ulster peasant-girl who wishes to know whom she will wed, goes at midnight on Midsummer Eve to a disused quarry, and casts in a ball of yarn; the wraith of the future husband will then take hold of the other end of the thread, and utter his own name. Sometimes a demon comes instead, and then the girl dies unmarried, and very soon afterwards.

In Greece, the ceremonies of St. John's Eve are

much the same as in all countries, and fire and water play the usual important part. Bathing in the sea, or in rivers, is practised, or people will bathe, and dry themselves by lighting a fire and jumping over it.

Another ceremony is that of the *Erma*. A few weeks before the festival, two people who have chosen each other for friends, plant some seeds in a basket and raise them in darkness, then exchange the plants on the day. Sometimes the basket, accompanied by a doll, lies on the window-sill. Dancing follows, and the couple seal their relationship by shaking hands three times over the fire.

In the Isles of Greece, a curious variant of the bonfire ceremony is supplied by jumping over the fires with a stone on one's head, and exclaiming: "I jump over the hare's fire; a stone is on my head!" * or words to that effect.

The significance of this does not seem to have been satisfactorily explained; but the hare is, of course, an emblem of the desired fertility, and perhaps the stones once signified an invocation to fire, which might be obtained by rubbing them together.

In north-west Europe, the midsummer ceremonies have been much influenced by the Nature-myth of the death of the sun-god, Baldur the Beautiful.

On Midsummer night, it was thought unlucky

* This is the translation, as nearly as possible for sense.

to put out the fire ; and if anyone was so unfortunate as to do so, his neighbours would not, on the following day, give him the means of re-kindling it, lest they should " give away their luck." *

Witchcraft was peculiarly to be feared at this time, for was it not witchcraft which had given the mistletoe its fatal power over Baldur ?

In Germany and France, cattle were crowned with flowers to keep away witches, and in Swabia, for the same purpose the church-bells were kept ringing all night, It was also thought prudent to cut the elder-tree and " to make it bleed ; " that is, apparently, to let the sap escape. The elder-tree was thought to be peculiarly the witches' tree ; and this ceremony of " bleeding " helped to deprive the witches of their power.

As well as witches, phantoms were specially to be dreaded. A watch in the church-porch would, as on St. Mark's Eve, be rewarded with a sight of the wraiths of those who were to die during the year.

In Ireland lingers a belief that the souls of living men go out of their bodies on St. John's Eve and visit the place where each will meet with death. This, it has been thought, explains the old fear of sleep on St. John's Eve—a fear which gave rise to the phrase " a St. John Baptist's night " as a synonym for one passed without sleep.

At Sutton Monks, a village in Oxfordshire, the

* W. E. Black in " The Antiquary."

old folk used to tell that King Arthur and his knights rode thither every Eve of St. John, from Camelot, to drink of the spring in Sutton Monks churchyard, and whoever met these august phantoms on the road, if he were not a person of pure life, died at the sight.

Sunken bells were also supposed "to rise from the dead" on St. John's Eve; emerge from the sea, and bask in the sun, and here again, we may trace the belief of St. John's power over water.

The custom of gathering fernseed on Midsummer Eve—Shakespeare's recipe for walking invisible—is too well known to need more than passing mention. A recent witness avers that a countryman at Heston, Middlesex, told him that he had often been present at the ceremony of catching fernseed. It was by no means always successful, for the seed had to fall of its own accord into the plate, and the plant must not be shaken.

The Midsummer customs in Northumberland of placing decorated stools at the street-corners, and in Cornwall of decorating the poles which mark the boundaries of the respective mines are ascribed to the influence of the *Ludi Compitalii*, the Roman feast of the Lares, or Household Gods. But perhaps Christian tradition would see in it a reminiscence of the preaching of St. John in the Wilderness. At least, that is the reason given for the decoration of the quadrangle at Magdalen College, Oxford, when the annual outdoor sermon

is preached there on Midsummer Day; the pulpit being fenced with green boughs to represent the scene of the Baptist's ministry.

The lore of this great festival of the solstice, with its extraordinary blending of Christian and Pagan symbolism, is manifold. Its history illustrates, in an especially exhaustive way, the theory of survivals, and the work of the human imagination in unifying the most diverse thoughts and ideas.

July 15

THE TRANSLATION OF ST. SWITHIN. The tradition concerning this commemoration is well known.

Saint Swithin, or Swithun, was Bishop of Winchester, A.D. 852–62. He is said to have expressed a wish to be buried "where the rain might fall upon him," and, in accordance with this request, was buried outside the Cathedral Church; but about nine years after his death, at the instance of some well-meaning monks, who wished to show him honour, his body was to have been removed to the cathedral choir. Rain, however, fell in such torrents on the day appointed for the translation, and continued so persistently for forty days afterwards, frustrating each attempt at removal, that the design was at last abandoned, and a shrine erected instead over the saint's churchyard grave.

From this shrine, it is said, emanated many miracles ; in particular, the tradition of St. Swithin's power to change the weather has been handed down to us. Rain on his day will imply rain for forty days after ; and if he gives us fine weather, fine weather will come in for the same length of time.

Mr. Grant Allen and others call Swithin "the rain-saint of England," and compare him to Saint Médard of France, Saint Isidor of Spain, and the rest, whose intercession seems to have been particularly valuable in bringing rain. But the legend points rather to a resentful use of the saint's powers —a plague of rain brought on those who thwarted his wishes, so that the parallel between him and the rain-saint, strictly so-called, is not exact. However, a few gentle showers on St. Swithin's Day are not objected to. In some parts of the country, a tactful euphemism is employed—"St. Swithin is christening the apples." But the dread that he may extend his favours and baptize by immersion instead of sprinkling is never far to seek. There is a note of triumph perceptible in the folk-rhyme which tells us :

"All the tears that Swithin can cry
St. Bartlemy's dusty mantle wipes dry."

According to another tradition : Saint Swithin was not at all averse, but the contrary, to the

removal of his bones. He appeared in a dream to ask for the translation, which was duly carried out. In this story, there is no suggestion of the saint's influence over the weather, although he was a miracle-worker who restored broken eggs to their original wholeness by blessing them, and caused the iron rings on his grave to detach themselves from the stone of their own accord. The conclusion, therefore, is that the Feast of St. Swithin was of import in pre-Christian times; a day which our pagan forefathers regarded as a meteorological crisis. The popular legend also embodies another pre-Christian superstition; namely, that it is unlucky to move a corpse which has once been buried.

One act of St. Swithin's life had an influence on practical politics. Whilst a monk at Winchester, he had become chaplain to King Egbert, who appointed him tutor to the young Ethelwulf. When his pupil became king, Swithin persuaded him to give a tenth part of each landed estate to the church, and promised in return that prayers should be made for him (Ethelwulf) in all the churches, every Wednesday. The rainy Saint of England would therefore seem to be commemorated in the payment of tithes, and in public prayers for the royal family.

July 25

ST. JAMES THE GREAT. Round the name of this proto-martyr of the twelve Apostles, whom

Herod slew with the sword, at the Passover of A.D. 44, some curious traditions have gathered.

Spanish traditions say that between Our Lord's Ascension and his own martyrdom, St. James visited Spain, preached the gospel there, and in obedience to a vision, built by the Ebro, the church called "Our Lady of the Pillar," because the Blessed Virgin, in his dream, had appeared standing in a pillar of jasper.

After St. James's violent death, his disciples Hermogenes and Philatus, put his body in a marble ship, and it floated of its own accord to the Spanish coasts, where it was enshrined at Compostella.

The legend which connects St. James with the pilgrim's famous scallop-shell runs as follows:

"When the marble ship which bore the headless body of St. James approached Bonzas, in Portugal, it happened to be the wedding-day of the chief magnate of the village, and while the bridal party were at sport, the horse of the bridegroom became unmanageable and plunged into the sea.

"The ship passed over the horse and its rider, and pursued its onward course, when to the amazement of all, the horse and its rider emerged from the water uninjured, and the cloak of the bridegroom was thickly covered with scallop-shells.

"All were dumbfounded, and knew not what to make of these marvels, but a voice from Heaven exclaimed: 'It is the Will of God, that all who henceforward make their vows to St. James, and

go on pilgrimage, shall take with them scallop-shells, and all who do so shall be remembered in the Day of Judgment.'

"On hearing this, the Lord of the village, with the bride and bridegroom, were duly baptized, and Bonzas * became a Christian Church."

It is a blunder to suppose that all pilgrims had the privilege of carrying scallop-shells as a badge of their sacred goal. Various papal bulls distinctly limit this right to the pilgrim of St. James of Compostella only.

St. James is the highly honoured patron saint of Spain. At the battle of Clarigo, in A.D. 841, when Ramiro, King of Leon, fought the Moors, St. James appeared on a white horse with housings decorated with scallop-shells, and led the Christian armies to victory. This is the story of the origin of the Spanish order of knighthood *Santiago de Espada* (Saint James of the Sword). As is fitting, the Order has its headquarters at Compostella, and the badge of the Order is a blood-stained sword, charged with a white scallop-shell.

Although a "naturalized" Spanish saint, St. James is not without his importance for England.

On his day formerly took place the orchard ceremony of blessing the young apples, for which a special form is provided in the Sarum use.

Hasted, in his "History of Kent" speaks of an

* *Sanctoral Portugues.* (Copied into Breviaries of Alcobaca and St. Cuenfate.)

old custom in the parish of Cliff, by which the rector distributes at his parsonage on St. James's Day, a mutton pie and a loaf to as many persons as choose to demand it—the cost to the parish being about 15*s.* per annum. The origin of this bounty seems sufficiently obscure; but we may, perhaps, trace some far-off connexion between the mutton pies and some ancient sacrifice of a sheep or goat, which at a time of year so critical for the harvest, might be thought to ensure a good crop.

The significance of St. James's Day as a turning-point for "the kindly fruits of the earth" lives on in the folk-rhyme:

"Till St. James's Day is past and gone,
There may be hops, and there may be none."

But it is in St. James's connexion with oysters that we link up again with the legend of the marble ship and the scallop-shells.

St. James's Day (Old Style) sees oysters come into season; and whoever eats them on that day will "never want for money for the rest of the year." Is this a gross English echo of the old promise that he who carries the scallop-shell to St. James shall "be remembered in the Day of Judgment?"

The oyster-shell grottos which adorn the pavement about this time, and the solicitations of the youthful gutter-artists to the passer-by "to remember the grotter" do, at any rate, bring to the

observant ear a murmur from the Shrine at Compostella, where the pilgrim, duly armed with his scallop-shell, goes to kiss the decorated image of St. James.

July 25

THE FEAST OF ST. CHRISTOPHER. This festival, celebrated on the same day as that of St. James, has left few survivals, but in view of the fact that frescoes of St. Christopher bearing the Holy Child are frequently discovered on removing the whitewash which disfigures so many of our old English churches, it is interesting to remember the superstition that whoever offered a prayer to St. Christopher, would not die that day. The fresco is most frequently found just inside the church doors, for convenience of access.

St. Christopher is a saint of the Roman and Greek churches, said to have lived in the third century. He protects from bad dreams, and from night alarms, from fire, flood, earthquake, shipwreck, and accidents on journeys ; from all forms of violent death and from a bad end. In the Greek Church, he is commemorated on May 9.

The legend of St. Christopher is as follows :

" He was a giant measuring twelve ells in height, and his Pagan name was Offerus. He lived in the land of Canaan, and was so proud of his strength, that he made a vow to serve only the mightiest.

Photo Anderson, Rome

ST. CHRISTOPHER

TITIAN

ST. DEINIOL'S
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Thinking no one could be mightier than the emperor, he entered the Imperial service; but one day, the emperor crossed himself for fear of the Devil, and perceiving this, Christopher entered the service of the Devil. He soon discovered that the Devil was afraid of the Cross; whereupon he enlisted under Christ, employing himself in carrying pilgrims across a deep turbulent stream. One day, a tiny child called to be carried across the water; but when in midstream, the burden became so heavy that Offerus was wellnigh borne down by the weight. The child proved to be Jesus, who laughingly told him he was carrying the world and its Maker on his shoulder. The giant's name was then changed to Christo-phoros—Bearer of Christ. He died three days afterwards and was canonized." He is the patron saint of motorists, travellers, pilgrims, sailors and ferrymen, and the guardian of buried treasure.

For all this, there is considerable doubt as to St. Christopher's existence, but there may have been a martyr of the name of Christopher who possibly suffered under the Emperor Decius. The many stories of his miracles are apocryphal; while eastern legends concerning him are so extravagant as to make the well-known tale of the giant-ferryman and his burden seem quite credible by contrast.

Before his conversion, he is said to have had a dog's head and to have eaten men; in other words, he was one of the Cynocephali, a race of men with

dog's heads. He was miraculously converted to the faith by a voice from heaven and baptized by a cloud, after which he went to Samos, in Syria, where there was a heathen king, curiously named Dagon; before whom he made attestation of his faith. He was finally martyred. Before his death, he prayed thus: "Grant that where my body is laid, no hail may fall, no fires may break out, there may not be famine nor mortality; and evil workers and demoniacs who come and pray with all their hearts and invoke my name may be saved." A voice answered him from heaven that it should not be thus only where his body was laid, but in other places also.

We trace in the eastern rather than the western stories the connexion of Christopher with good-luck. Perhaps we may go a step further, and think that this commemoration of St. Christopher superseded a cult of Sirius, the great dog-star, whose "heliacal rising," or rising at the same time as the sun, was thought to cause the dog-days, and made the gigantic star at this time of the year an object of superstitious dread. Also, there seems something significant in the making of St. Christopher the guardian of buried treasure. In Egyptian mythology, genii with dog's heads were usually figured as protecting treasure-chests; the idea of the faithful hound being transcended, and given something of the divine.

Another conjecture identifies St. Christopher

with the constellation of Orion, the great giant of classical legend, who, in a play of Sophocles, is represented as carrying a dwarf on his shoulder to lead him when he was blind. Sirius is the dog who was also given him as his guide, so that in spite of the confusion of ideas, he may be a classical survival.

July 26

ST. ANNE'S DAY. St. Anne is identified, by a world-wide Christian tradition, with the mother of the Blessed Virgin. Nothing certain is known of her history, and her festival has suffered many vicissitudes. It was first ordered to be kept in the west by Leo III (A.D. 795–816), but in 1570 Pius V expunged it from the Roman Calendar, "probably (says Provost Vernon Staley) on the score of the legendary character of the commemoration."

The remarkable popularity of the saint in England is attributed by some to the Christian name of Richard II's first wife—Anne of Bohemia—whose amiable disposition and early death tended, it may be, to canonize her in the people's eyes. It is at least significant that the devotion of St. Anne in Western Christendom, is first mentioned by Urban VI in a letter to the English bishops in the year 1378—the year subsequent to Richard's accession. Another impetus to interest in, at least, the *name* of St. Anne, was given by the Queen of James I, who, for all his Protestantism, was an observer of

signs and days, and was pleased at the coincidence which set a "St. Anne" to follow a "St. James" in the English Calendar; and by intent or happy chance, James and his Queen were crowned on July 25—St. James's Day and St. Anne's Eve.

In the Sarum Breviary are many forms of prayer to St. Anne, showing that she occupied a high place, and bells were frequently dedicated to her in England. The Monday after St. Anne's Day was formerly kept as a feast in the town of Newbury, Berks. Bacon with beans was the dish ordained by custom at the festal meal, and afterwards a cabbage stuck on a pole was carried in procession, to represent a civic mace; from which the anniversary itself gained the name of Mace Monday.

For the cult of St. Anne in its perfection we must go to Brittany. St. Anne is the patroness of Brittany, and receives great honour in what, says the Breton legend, was her native land.

According to this legend, Anne was a princess, or queen-consort. She was childless for long, to the satisfaction of her tyrannous lord, who desired to have no children. Then, when she was about to become a mother, he sent her from him. She wandered to the seashore, and was steered by an angel in a ship of light, to Judæa, where her daughter Mary was born. In her old age, Anne longed for her native land, and returned to it. Here, by a gesture, she could still tempests; and greater favours were to be accorded to her. She was

visited by her grandson Christ, who promised to grant her anything she desired. She asked for a church to be built and dedicated to her at Auray: "As far as the spire can be seen or the bell heard, let there be peace for all, both of soul and body." The prayer was granted; and, in addition, Christ smote the ground with His staff and gifted the spring which gushed forth, with the supernatural virtue of restoring lost youth and strength. This is the famous spring of Sainte Anne de la Palude, to which pilgrimages are made and where cures are wrought.

The pardon of St. Anne d'Auray is one of the most wonderful sights of the Breton year. The golden image of St. Anne is borne by four widows, on a litter, followed by a statue of the Blessed Virgin borne by four maidens. They go in procession to the Scala Sancta, and ascend it followed by clergy and choir. Countless pilgrims are climbing it on their knees all day long, nine months indulgence being granted for every stair. The hymn is sung:

"Et, nous Bretons, objet de ta tendresse
Que ferons-nous pour payer tes bienfaits?
Nous nous plairons a répéter sans cesse:
Amour, amour, pour Sainte Anne a jamais.
Pour toi, Sainte Anne, O bienheureuse Mère
De l'auguste Reine des Cieux!"

The shrine over the fountain is a magnificent modern basilica, to which countless pilgrims stream, and in which litanies never cease. Offerings are

presented by the crowd, corn, or fowls, often; sometimes brooms, nails, and locks of hair, but candles are chiefly in request. All night the church is densely filled, and a torchlight procession is held without. A bonfire follows, and an effigy burnt, strangely enough, of William of Orange! St. Anne is a strongly Jacobite saint, and not only are the Stuarts remembered by her, but the remnant of the French loyalists gather at her shrine, every year on St. Anne's Day, to make speeches, and to drink despairing toasts.

Heathen memories cling round this pathetic and typically Breton devotion.

Where the church of the pilgrimage now stands, was Pagan holy ground, bearing the name of "Ker-Anna," or Anna's camp. Scholars have identified this Anne as the Celtic Cybele, the Mother of the Gods, the Earth-Goddess, from whom all come, and the patroness of birth and death, more particularly perhaps of *death*, which is always a dominant thought in the Breton mind, and we may compare, if we choose, the name *Anne* with the Breton word for death personified—the dreaded spirit "Ankou."

The ancient statue of St. Anne in the church at Auray is thought to be one of "the Earth-Mother," dug up by chance in 1625, and eagerly honoured. Be that as it may, faith in the holy spring remains unshaken. It is perhaps the shadow of this faith, thrown across our own land, that has resulted in the "St Anne's Wells" of England.

One of these was formerly to be found near Bristol, at the entrance of a "St. Anne's Wood," now, unfortunately, cut down and built over.

The beautiful legend of St. Anne and St. Joachim is, that they were an elderly couple who had been long married, but were without children. When Joachim went to make his offering at the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, the high-priest rebuked him for venturing to appear when he had no children among so many who were so blessed. St. Joachim retired very sorrowful, and left Jerusalem to bewail his reproach among the shepherds in the pastures, as his offering was not acceptable to God. An angel, however, appeared to him, and told him that he should have a daughter called Mary, and that for a sign he should meet his wife Anna at the Golden Gate of the Temple. St. Anna was also visited by an angel, who comforted her in the same way, and gave her also for a token that she should meet her husband at the Golden Gate. So they each set forth, and their meeting at the Golden Gate forms a favourite subject in mediæval art ; one of its most beautiful interpretations being by Giotto. The Virgin Mary, thus miraculously born, was dedicated to the service of the Temple by her parents.

August 1

LAMMAS DAY. The word "Lammas" has had various interpretations, the most generally

accepted being that it is a corrupted form of "Loaf-Mass."

It was a feast of thanksgiving for the first fruits of the harvest annually observed in England at the beginning of August. Bread made of the new wheat was offered at Mass on this day and was solemnly blessed; and hence, in many parts of England, tenants were bound to bring in new wheat of the year to their lords on or before the first of August.

A curious custom at York Minster originated in the supposed association of the word Lammas with lambs. The tenants of the Minster brought each a live lamb to Mass on this day, as an offering to the Church and to be blessed at the High Altar (the Minster of York being dedicated to St. Peter in Chains, a Lammas commemoration).

It has been urged in support of this derivation of *Lammas* from *Lamb-Mass* that the term used in Wales for Lammas Day signifies the day of lamb-tithing. But Sir John Rhys says the origin of the word is from "Lug," the Celtic sun-god, and that August 1 was his festival—"Lug-nassad," corrupted into Lammas.

There is, certainly, no doubt that this Christian festival of harvest firstfruits replaced a festival of the sun, with the usual savage rites and symbolism. A Scottish custom links Lammas curiously with May Eve. A portion of the Beltain cake or bannock is left over for Lammas, and must all be eaten on

that day before the sun sets. No special cake is made for Lammas.

The Lugnassad, or Festival of Lugus, was held at Lammastide among the pagan Celts. It seems to have been specially important in Leinster, where it was held in the chief burying-ground, and connected itself with the memory of a dead Celtic queen. Of it, the author of the "Book of Leinster" says that "Seven fields inviolable, with no house, were for the funeral games of Carman." This funeral feast became, in Christian times, a Christian festival, or fair, lasting for seven days—the first day being called "The Fair of the Saints"; the second, sacred to the kings of Leinster; the third to the women, and so on. It seems to have been held, however, only once in every three years. It had many secular interests—musical performances for royal bounties, horse-racing, tax-regulations, law-suits, and so on. Withal, we hear that it was primarily held "that the land with its goodly fruits might be granted to the people of Leinster from the Lord"; and failure to observe it would bring ill-luck.

The Lammas celebrations in the Isle of Man included a fair and the visiting of wells and springs to secure luck, a custom which seems also to have obtained in Wales. The hill-tops were a favourite resort at early morning to see the sunrise and, again, for the sake of tracing the sacred founts to their hilly source. The influence of sun-worship in such customs is not hard to trace.

Lammastide owed much of its old importance in agricultural districts to the ceremony of redistribution which then took place. From Lady Day to Lammas, in other words, from seedtime to harvest, pastures were rented out to individual tenants. At Lammas the land again became common property, and the community divided it afresh, sometimes by drawing lots. Here was a special reason for rejoicing and thankfulness; * the restoration of common rights, and the ingathering of individual labour. A feast of the tenants closed the day. Lammas was one of the four cross-quarter or half-quarter days (the others being Candlemas, Whitsun and Martinmas), and the rents of several tenures are, by custom, still paid at this time. That it was once a synonym for a general reckoning is shown by the old phrase; "the Latter Lammas"—*i.e.* the Judgment Day. "I will pay him at the Latter Lammas" meaning, "I will not pay him in this world."

LOTHIAN LAMMAS FESTIVAL. This curious custom should be mentioned in this connexion, for though it may also have an obscure ceremonial religious meaning, it suggests, on the surface, the redivision of common land to which reference has just been made, as characteristic of Lammas.

About a month before Lammas, the herdsmen of

* G. L. Gomme.

Lothian used to band together in different companies, and build bowers of stones or sod, the erection lasting about a month. On the morning of Lammas Day, they met together in their different bands, with the blowing of horns and other ceremonies, and set to work to batter down one another's bowers. As each combatant carried a cudgel of some kind, the victory was not usually gained without bloodshed. The day closed with races, and trials of skill, for which the prizes were a bonnet, a pair of garters, and a knife.

LAMMAS CEREMONY AT RIPON. This shows the influence of the seasonal dread of drought. At Ripon, on the Saturday after Lammas Day, the effigy of St. Wilfrid (A.D. 741) who is said to have once saved the city from a drought, used to be carried into the streets, the people going out in procession to meet it.

EXETER LAMMAS FAIR. The particular appropriateness of this fair to Lammas is not so easy to trace, as are some of the previously cited customs. A glove of gigantic size was stuffed and decorated and carried in procession through the city on a pole. It was then placed on the top of Guildhall, and was not taken down till the fair was over.

The Catholic commemoration of St. Peter's Chains became connected with Lammas Day by chance. According to the Gospel account, the

delivery of St. Peter from prison took place in the spring, soon after Passover, but it happened that the church to S. Peter ad Vincula which was to enshrine the sacred relics, his fetters, and was built on the Esquiline Hill, Rome, was dedicated on Lammas Day, and the commemoration at this date became popular.

A curious tradition about St. Peter's chains arose from a misconception of the name "Gule of August" written in the old calendars against Lammas Day. "Gule," or "Yule," of course, is the Gaelic term for a wheel, that is to say, a solar revolution, a feast and anniversary; but the word confused itself in the popular mind with the Latin *gula*, a throat, and hence came the legend that the daughter of a Roman tribune, named Quirinus, had been by the touch of St. Peter's chains, miraculously healed of a disease of the throat.

In mediæval England, Lammas Day was appointed for the payment of Peter's Pence—the yearly tribute to the Pope.

In Paris, the day was a feast for "The Society of the Trade of Cobblers." They went in procession to the Church of St. Peter of Arsis, and there divided among one another their offerings of consecrated bread (*Le pain bénit*). The day closed with a tavern-feast.

Here we seem again to trace the peculiar religious importance of bread blessed on this day of Harvest Thanksgiving; an importance which is curiously

voiced in the fragment of a Saxon charm, cited by the great folk-lore scholar, Sir G. L. Gomme: "Take from the hallowed bread which is hallowed on Lammas Day, four pieces, and crumble them on the four corners of the barn. . . ."

In the Greek Church, the blessing of new grapes once took place, with peculiar ceremonies, on Lammas Day. The Emperor and the Patriarch went, before the vintage, from the country palace of Hieria, to a neighbouring vineyard with a great procession. The Patriarch blessed a basket of grapes on a marble table, and the Emperor presented a grape to every patrician among his attendants.

We may compare with this the name for Lammas Day which is given in the Sarum Missal. It is here called "*Benedictio novorum fructuum.*"

August 15

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN: formerly called the DORMITION OF THE VIRGIN, or the VIRGIN'S REPOSE. In the Sarum Rite the collect for the Feast of the Assumption runs: "Let the honoured festival of to-day, O Lord, bring us continual aid: on which the Holy Mother of God underwent temporal death, yet could not be holden by the bonds of death: because she bare incarnate of herself Thy Son, Our Lord," etc.

This is a festival of eastern origin, which originally

commemorated the Virgin's death in the midst of the company of the Apostles and disciples. In the time of Constantine this festival was kept on January 18, but in A.D. 582 under the Emperor Maurice, it was transferred to its present date. Owing to the exaggerations attached to the later forms of its observance (of which Titian's famous "Assumption" may be taken as an example in art) it was omitted from the English calendar at the Reformation. Going back to the earlier treatment of the subject, we may instance Giotto's beautiful "Dormition of the Virgin," where the Virgin is shown lying on her bed of death surrounded by the Apostles, one of them gently raising her in his arms—the figure of Christ stands by the side of the bed, holding in his arms the Virgin's soul in the form of a child, which He is lifting towards heaven. Nothing can be more simple and natural in its restraint than the whole conception of this picture. A beautiful but much later picture of Botticelli's shows the Apostles looking down into the Virgin's empty tomb, whence it was supposed that her body had been miraculously taken up to heaven, and within it lilies are growing only. These examples mark the gradual change which took place in the representation of the subject from the contemporary developments in belief, but in Spain still the dramatic idea with which we are familiarized by Titian is literally carried out, as an eye-witness tells us:

Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin

"The Feast of the Assumption is one of the most popular of the festivals of Spain. A charming mediæval survival is to be noted at Elche, a small town near Alicante, pre-eminent in its Christian fervour, in spite of its Moorish setting. But a special favour was said to be bestowed on this little town by Our Lady of the Assumption, who sent her miraculous image over the sea in a chest inscribed: '*Soy para Elche.*' This image is enshrined in the Cathedral and possesses clothes and jewels of enormous value, and also houses and palm-groves bearing the monogram M. V.

"This very image has originated an operetta of the Assumption, from the legend that the libretto was found enclosed with it in the wooden chest. It is performed every year on August 14 and 15, and is undoubtedly of great antiquity. The cathedral is turned for the occasion into a theatre, and a huge stage erected in the chancel. A procession comes in, headed by the Virgin, represented by a pretty boy of twelve, accompanied by little girls dressed as angels—they are greeted by a strangely Moorish, almost barbaric, strain of song from the choir. The Virgin advances to a bed on the centre of the stage, and kneeling down, invokes death; thereupon the heavens open, and a *mangrana*, or celestial grenade, is gently lowered, an angel proceeds out of it, and hands to Mary a golden palm, in signification of her approaching death. The Apostles now surround the deathbed singing an ancient dirge. Then the

representative of the Virgin disappears, and her place is taken by the miraculous image of Our Lady. The soul of the Virgin is then taken up into Heaven. On the second day, after the image has been laid on the deathbed, and vows and candles offered to it, it is taken round in procession. The second part of the drama consists in the Virgin herself being taken up into heaven, being slowly drawn up amid figures of saints and angels, and receiving her crown from God the Father to the sound of bells and other musical instruments: the crowd, now wild with excitement, praying, weeping, and applauding enthusiastically." *

In the Greek Church, the festival is accompanied in some places by offerings of new wheat and small cakes to the Blessed Virgin, and a Syrian text of the sixth century says that: "The Apostles ordered there should be a commemoration of the Blessed One on account of the vine bearing branches and the trees bearing fruit, that clouds of hail might not come and destroy them." The firstfruits of vine and corn of the present day may originate from the Syrian kneaded offering, and the oblations made formerly to the Syrian Goddess of Agriculture. The Greek Festival of the Assumption begins on August 6 and lasts nine days.†

Greek Christians, Copts and Armenians prepare for the festival by a period of fasting, called the "Assumption Lent." "During this period in

* "The Romance of Religion."

† M. Hamilton: "Greek Saints and their Festivals."

Palestine," says the Rev. Thomas Reilly, "Greek families erect little white tents in the enclosure of Gethsemane, opposite Mary's traditional tomb, and there spend several days in retirement."

Frazer sees in it a transference from the *Nemoralia*, or great festival of Diana Jana at Nemi on August 13. It was equally for the protection of the vines and fruit-trees, and in the Eastern Church this point is asserted still.

ASSUMPTION CUSTOM IN SICILY. Swine and other animals are, on the Feast of the Assumption, slaughtered before the shrine of Porto Empedocle, Sicily.* An evident reminiscence of sacrifices to Ceres and Proserpine.

Assumption ceremonies existed formerly in England, in one of which herbs were borne to church to be blessed by the priest, and afterwards used for curative charms. No doubt also, the mimetic representations of the event resembling those of the pageant of the Assumption at Dieppe, and also at Messina, celebrated by means of machinery and other accessories, were as usual in England as on the Continent, until they were abolished at the Reformation.

August 24

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY. We get very little information about this saint in the Gospels.

* H. Wilden Carr.

In the first three, he is mentioned by name in the list of the twelve Apostles. Tradition identifies him with the Nathanael of St. John's account, the "Israelite without guile" whom Philip brought to Christ, and who was recognized, we gather, by some mystic sign: "Before that Philip called thee, *when thou wast under the fig-tree*, I saw thee." It is possible that Bartholomew's other name was Nathanael, since Bartholomew simply means "son of Tolmai." St. Jerome identifies this Tolmai with the King of Geshur whose daughter was one of the wives of King David, and later traditions confused him with Ptolemy and gave rise to the legend that Bartholomew was of royal Egyptian descent. We may, if we choose, accept St. Jerome's theory that he was the only one of the Twelve who was of noble birth; the only aristocrat among the lowly.

Bartholomew is said to have preached in India, and given to his converts there a copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew in Hebrew. He is also supposed to have propagated the faith in Arabia, and at Hierapolis in Phrygia, in which latter place he was accompanied by St. Philip, and denounced the serpent-worship they found flourishing there. St. Philip was slain, but an earthquake which swallowed up the sacred serpent, its priesthood, and the proconsul, caused the release of St. Bartholomew, who journeyed on to preach in Armenia, and was flayed alive by order of the Armenian prince, and afterwards exposed on a cross to die in agonies.

Legends cluster round his end. His body was said to have been enclosed in a lead coffin that the Christians might not obtain it; the coffin, being cast into the sea, floated like wood out of sight.

His festival is of comparatively late origin; not *commanded* to be observed until the eleventh century. Also it is kept on different days: by the Armenians, for instance, on December 8. There are relics in innumerable places; many in France and Germany. At Sauvemajeur some were enclosed in the leaden weathercock of the church tower, as a protection against lightning. An attempt to move them to the choir resulted in a death from lightning, and they were put back in the weathercock. This seems to suggest that St. Bartholomew shares with St. Barbara some special power over thunderstorms.

He also cured catalepsy. At least, there was an old custom in Brittany and Belgium, in which cataleptic patients resorted, on St. Bartholomew's Eve, to the parish church and spent the night in dancing, as a sure cure for a recurrence of the fits.

An even more curious superstition connects itself in Belgium with the saint's name. "Servant girls are not allowed to go into cabbage-fields on this day, as the Apostle who gives large heads to the cabbage plants on this day, objects to their prying eyes."

The saint has had some vogue in England. For instance, it was a custom at Croyland Abbey until the time of Edward IV to give little knives to all

comers in allusion to the knife wherewith Bartholomew was flayed. Many of these knives of various sizes have been found in the ruins of the abbey, and in the river. They are also displayed in the escutcheon of the abbey, being quartered with the three whips of St. Guthlac.

A great fair was annually held in Smithfield called St. Bartholomew's Fair. It gave rise to abuses and was suppressed in 1710.

In the village of Dorrington, in the county of Lincoln, on St. Bartholomew's Day, a number of maidens clad in their best attire, went in procession to a small chapel, then standing in the parish, and strewed its floor with rushes, from whence they proceeded to a piece of land called the "Play Garths," where they were joined by the rest of the inhabitants, and games and sports were indulged in for the remainder of the day.

Rushbearing was kept up in some parts of Yorkshire, by decorating a cartload of rushes with flowers and going in procession therewith round the whole of the place.

St. Bartholomew's Day was signalized by the meeting of scholars from different schools for the purpose of disputation, and to test their proficiency in learning. Stowe mentions this custom in his "Survey," and Lilly, the astrologer, in his "Life." In the "Life of Sir Thomas More" it is said that on the Eve of St. Bartholomew the scholars used to repair to the churchyard of the Priory in Smithfield

for trials in proficiency of learning. The same custom was observed at Lee Fair, in Yorkshire.

September 14

HOLY CROSS DAY. Some explanation of this commemoration has been given under the heading for May 3. Provost Staley thinks the two calendar Festivals of the Cross originated jointly in Jerusalem, early in the fourth century.

After his mother's successful quest, Constantine built two churches in Jerusalem—one on the supposed site of Calvary, the other over the Holy Grave ; and their dedication festival was celebrated in A.D. 335—apparently on September 14, as the reputed anniversary of the Finding.

This September festival became very popular in Jerusalem, whither crowds of pilgrims came, year by year, to adore the Sacred Relic. In A.D. 614 Jerusalem was taken by the Persians, and for thirteen years the Relic remained in Persia with the captive Emperor Heraclius. There was such universal joy at its return (A.D. 627) that coins commemorating the event were struck, and the festival grew in importance, becoming an anniversary of its restoration : " the Exaltation of the Cross." This sub-title " Exaltation of the Cross " is, however, attributed by some authorities to the commemoration of an event even earlier than Helena's Finding —namely, the miraculous vision of Constantine, to

whom, before his victory over Maxentius, appeared a luminous cross, inscribed with the words: "*Touto Nika!*"—"Conquer by this!" There seems little doubt that all these memories are blended together in the calendar festivals of the Cross, and that it is not necessary or even accurate, to distinguish too scrupulously between them.

It is possible that the September festival became the more celebrated of the two, because it coincided with, and helped to abolish, the rites of the *Thalysia*—the September festival of Demeter, the Earth-Goddess. The earth had yielded buried fruit in the shape of three crosses, and the Tree of Life had been replanted! Christians could not fail to see the parallel, and to rejoice in it.

A writer in *Folk Lore* mentions a modern Sicilian custom which seems to illustrate this.

It appears that, at the shrine of Santa Maria delle Grazie, on the road to San Biagio, on the second Sunday in September, swine are slaughtered—the animals having previously been led in procession. Swine, as is well known, were sacred to the Earth-Goddess, from their habit of digging in the earth.

Another contributor tells us:

"In Syria, on September 14, fires are kindled on the housetops, and the inhabitants, together with any guests who happen to be present, leap over the flames. This custom, the writer suggests, is a survival of a fire-festival, which the Christian commemoration superseded."

Holy Cross Day

We have already spoken (see May 3) of the popularity of the Festivals of the Cross in England, and of the tradition that Helena was British-born, as possibly contributing to that popularity. A great many churches in Great Britain have the dedication " Holy Cross " or " Holy Rood," and in most of them, before the Reformation, we may presume some attempt was made at imitating the imposing cultus of the Holy Cross at Jerusalem and Rome. There would be the exposition of relics in the rood-loft, or a local Holy Rood, like the famous one of Boxley, with its lifelike movements, and miracles wrought on the beholders' hearts.

That Holy Cross Day was observed as a holiday in pre-Reformation England, and even later, we learn from the tradition that it was a day on which to go nutting. Brand quotes from an old play, " Grim the Collier " :

" This day they say is called Holy Rood Day
And all the youths are now a-nutting gone."

We also gather that the privilege was sometimes abused, probably to the extent of neglecting religious observances, for *Poor Robin's Almanack*, 1709, has this couplet :

" The devil, as the common people say,
Doth go a-nutting on Holy Rood Day."

The custom, it appeared, died hard at Eton, where there was a kind of ritual regulating the holiday. Before leave was granted, verses on autumn fruits and the coming of winter had to be composed by the boys; and on the return of the nutting party, presents were made to the masters.

September 29

FEAST OF ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS (MICHAELMAS DAY). This festival, as its popular name implies, was in the first instance sacred to St. Michael only. It dates from the fifth century. The commemoration of All Angels was a later addition, and, in the old Calendars, observed on various dates.

In 1670, Pope Clement X. gave it its present place in the Roman Calendar, that is, October 2; so it is a separate commemoration still, so far as the Roman Church is concerned, and even in the Anglican Calendar St. Michael, always a favourite saint in England, has the pre-eminence, and may be said to rule the day.

In Anglo-Saxon England (*temp.* Ethelred) the feast was provided with a preparatory fast of three days, during which the devout went to church, and walked in procession barefooted. There was to be no work done on the feast. There is a seasonal fitness in the time of this festival. St. Michael, the enemy of the Devil, would naturally be invoked

Photo Alinari

ST. MICHAEL
RAPHAEL

at the approach of the long nights, and the dreaded equinoctial gales. He was considered the protector of sailors. Some of the earliest churches dedicated to him stand on headlands. Mounts and promontories are frequently dedicated to the archangel; for example, Syme in Greece, St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, and Mont St. Michel in Normandy.

At Mont St. Michel in Normandy, nine druidesses used to sell arrows to sailors to charm away storms. These arrows had to be discharged by a man twenty-five years old. It is also a legend on St. Michael's Mount, that in a magic circle traced on its summit, the imprisoned devils which have been thrown out of human bodies, are in chains. If by any mischance anyone places foot within this circle, he is impelled to run the whole night long without being able to stop.

St. Michael is the Prince of Angels, and as the "One who is like unto God" (the meaning of the name), is an archetype of Christ, and in many ways succeeds to the position of the old sun-god; for instance, as guardian of pinnacles and mounts he is the successor of Apollo, to whom they were dedicated in Pagan times. His fight with the great dragon also shows him to possess other characteristics of the sun-god. In rabbinical and scriptural lore, he is the leader of the Armies of God, and separator of the good from the bad in the Day of Judgment.

His attributes are the flaming sword and scales,

and sometimes a spear, with which he thrusts Lucifer and his legions out of heaven. Michael is the guardian angel of the Christians and the Jews, as was signified by the passage describing him in the Book of Daniel xii, 1 ; all the might, majesty, and radiance of " thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers " is centred in him.

He is said to have disputed about the body of Moses, when contending with the Devil (Jude ix), and in the Book of Revelation, to have, with the angels, fought the dragon and his angels.

In later traditions, he appeared to Joan of Arc, clothed in dazzling armour, and armed with his lance ; he showed her the unhappy divisions of her country, and urged her to the work of rescue. As the first of the four great archangels, St. Michael is more often than any other represented in art. In the Book of Enoch, he is described as " presiding over human virtue, and commanding the nations."

MICHAELMAS CUSTOMS IN ENGLAND. It was long the custom to elect governors of towns and cities on this day, from the comparison drawn between their functions and those of the angel guardians.

Farmers formerly gave a supper on Michaelmas Eve to all their employees. At this meal, some of the features of the Roman *Saturnalia* were reproduced, and there was much pleasant familiarity between master and men.

A handful of every kind of corn that had been produced on the farm was given to the cattle for their supper, and some also scattered in the court-yard for the wild birds to pick up. In many places bonfires were kindled.

In the west of England, girls used to gather crab-apples, which they arranged in a loft in such a manner as to form with them the initials of their suitors' names. The future husband had to be selected according to the initials which looked the most natural when inspected on Old Michaelmas Day.

TWO CURIOUS ESSEX CUSTOMS. At Bishop's Stortford, every seventh Michaelmas, the young men were accustomed to assemble in the fields, choose one of their number as "leader," and then follow him wherever he chose to lead—over hedge and ditch. During this pilgrimage, nothing was to be eaten, except the cakes and ale which the hosts of the taverns en route would provide; and if the weather was fair, the whole night would be spent outdoors.

At King's Hall, Rochford, on the Wednesday after Michaelmas was held the "Lawless Court"; a mock court which, as some writers conjecture, might well have been serious once. The "court" met before sunrise, and had to come "secretly and bringing no lights." A blazing faggot was brought by the president. Cockcrow was the signal

to begin; the steward made the entries with a piece of coal, and there was much other buffoonery. It has been suggested that, in its origin, the "court" was a means of employing some secret magical incantations on behalf of the harvest.

MICHAELMAS SERMON. This is preached every year, or, at least, within recent memory *was* preached, in the Church of St. James, Clerkenwell Green. It originated in a bequest of £50 to the parish by a parishioner, on the condition that £3 was expended thus each year:

Fifteen shillings for the minister who, on the afternoon of Michaelmas Day delivered a sermon on "Preparation for Death."

Half a crown to the reader of the usual Church of England prayers;

To the Clerk and Sexton, half a crown;

To forty poor parishioners, sixpence apiece; and the residue to provide a collation for the minister and others.

IRISH AND SCOTTISH MICHAELMAS CUSTOMS. In Ireland, they kill a sheep for Michaelmas and give a portion to the poor. This is said to be in memory of a miracle wrought by St. Patrick by the archangel's aid.

In the Hebrides, they bake a Michaelmas bannock, "as big as a quern." From the harvest wheat, a cake called a *struthan* is made for every member

of the household, and if the harvest is late, an early patch is sown on purpose to provide the struthan, which is evidently the survival of an offering to the house-spirits, or house-demons. Another custom is to present wild carrots to all the girls in the house.

In Skye, the inhabitants, though Protestant, keep Michaelmas Feast. There is a kind of procession round the church.

MICHAELMAS GOOSE. The custom of eating *goose* at Michaelmas has various origins ascribed to it, which appear to be modern explanations of an ancient use. Most probably, geese, which were solar emblems in the early ages, were sacrificed on this day, and the custom is thus much older than the various legends which profess to account for it. It is as certainly older than the Armada. In the time of Edward IV, one John de la Haye is recorded as rendering to William Barnaby, Lord of Lastres, Hereford, for his lands, " one goose, fit for the lord's dinner, on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel." There is an old saying to the effect that those who eat goose on Michaelmas Day shall not want for money all the year.

St. Michael in his capacity of fighting devils, is consequently protector against thunder and lightning. Stowe records how the Devil came down in a storm to the belfry of St. Michael's, Cornhill, when the ringers were ringing a peal to keep off

the storm ; they fainted at the sight, and afterwards when they came to themselves observed ugly claw-marks impressed upon the masonry ; no doubt left there in spite, by the Devil's recollection of his defeat by his old enemy !

MICHAELMAS WEATHER-LORE. " As many days old as the moon is at Michaelmas, so many floods there will be after."

(Stevenson, in his "Twelve Months")

" At Michaelmas time or a little before
Half an apple goes to the core."

(Suffolk Rhyme).

October 18

ST. LUKE'S DAY. Little is known of this evangelist's history and person. Eusebius says he was born in Antioch in Syria, and this identification with " the beloved physician " mentioned by St. Paul has led to the idea that he was a slave who had been instructed in medicine, as was often the case in the East.

The tradition that he was a painter is a charming one, but unfortunately is supposed to be quite spurious. He is said to have painted the portrait of the Blessed Virgin ; and several pictures by old masters represent him engaged in this task.

He is said to have been martyred at Patras. His body, brought to Constantinople, A.D. 357, was

afterwards removed to the monastery of St. Salvador in Nursia ; and the fixing of his festival on October 18 seems to be connected with this removal.

St. Luke, in common with other saints, is supposed to favour love-omens. An old writer cites the following charm for use on the Vigil :

Make an ointment of marigold, marjoram, thyme, and wormwood, with honey and white vinegar. With this, on going to rest, anoint the body, and repeat thrice :

> " St. Luke ! St. Luke ! Be kind to me,
> In dreams let me my true love see ! "

St. Luke's Day in York was once known as " Whip-Dog Day," from a custom which obtained among schoolboys of whipping every dog they saw in the streets. Its supposed origin was some act of sacrilege on the part of a dog at the Mass for the day.

CHARLTON FAIR, BLACKHEATH. This fair, held on St. Luke's Day, formerly perpetuated a very curious custom, or piece of symbolism, apparently connected with St. Luke's emblem, an ox. Many of those who attended the fair wore horns on their heads. Horns of various animals were sold ; and the gingerbread and cakes were marked with a horn.

St. Luke's weather-lore is of the favourable kind. A few brilliantly fine days occurring about the time

of this festival have earned the name of " St. Luke's little summer."

October 25

SS. CRISPIN AND CRISPINIAN. These saints are the patron saints of the shoemakers. They were two brothers of noble birth who, on being converted to Christianity towards the middle of the third century, came from Rome to preach at Soissons in France, and in imitation of St. Paul, they worked with their hands to support themselves, in making shoes during the night. They converted many to the faith, until a complaint was lodged against them before Rictus Verius, the most implacable enemy of the Christian faith, who had been appointed governor. They bore the most cruel torments and finished their course by the sword in A.D. 287.

Over their grave at Soissons was erected the Church of S. Crepin-le-Petit, and there was a custom at the Soissons Rogation Procession of making a halt over the site of this now demolished church, and saying the antiphon and collect for the day.

On the continent, St. Crispin's festival long retained its religious character, and was responsible for several guilds of shoemakers, also for mystery plays on the martyrdom. In England, it rapidly secularized, and the story of the martyred shoemaker brothers became a romantic legend, centring round two shoemaking princes.

A great impetus was naturally given to the observance of the day among Englishmen, by the fact of the Battle of Agincourt having been fought on this day. Shakespeare makes Henry V. harangue his soldiers in a speech beginning:

"This day is called the Feast of Crispian.
He who outlives this day, and comes safe home
Shall stand a-tiptoe when this day is named
And rouse him at the name of Crispian."

Shoemakers drank to "the pious memory of St. Crispian," and on this, their patronal festival, would do no work. There is a story of the Emperor Charles V., that, visiting incognito, a cobbler on St. Crispin's Day and requiring shoes repaired, he met with a blank refusal, and on being invited to drink to St. Crispin instead, got the unsuspecting cobbler to talk high treason. Next day the emperor sent for the man, forgave him his free remarks, and ordained that cobblers should bear the imperial crown upon their arms, and take precedence of shoemakers in Flanders from that day.

CELEBRATIONS OF ST. CRISPIN'S DAY. In 1734, Crispin's Day was thus kept in Dublin. The Society of Journeymen Cordwainers walked in procession to St. Michael's Church, where they heard a sermon, and then dined at the "Bull's Head."

In Edinburgh, in 1741, there was a procession of shoemakers; their "king" wore the collar of their Order—"Champion Crispianus." There was much pageantry in the procession, and a representation is mentioned of "St. Crispin taking the measure of St. Ursula's foot."

In Sunderland, St. Crispin's Friendly Society held their annual dinner on this day, and transacted their committee business. There was a procession, in which members of the royal family were personified.

In *Notes and Queries* for January 10, 1852, a correspondent, signing himself R. W. B., says that in the parishes of Cuckfield and Hurstpierpoint, in Sussex, bonfires were lit on St. Crispin's Day, and boys went round collecting money. It is to be noted that one of the ancient local family of Burnell had attended Henry V. at Agincourt.

October 31

ALL HALLOWS' EVE. The vigil of the Feast of All Saints is, in folklore and popular religion, as important as the feast itself. It rivals St. John's Eve for omens, spells and all sorts of mystic practices, which, in its case, are connected with the waning power of the sun and with the great druidical festival of *Samhain.*

Samhain signifies the "end of summer." On November 1, the druids sacrificed a horse to the

sun as a thanksgiving for the harvest. An Irish king who reigned 400 A.D., commanded sacrifices to the moon-deity on the evening of *Samhain.* Sacrifices were also offered to the spirits of the dead, who were believed at this season to have liberty to return to visit their old earthly haunts and their friends. The ancient Romans had a popular feast to the dead in February, the *Ferralia.* In the year A.D. 610, the then Pope of Rome ordained that the heathen pantheon should be converted into a Christian Church, and dedicated to *all the martyrs.* Their festival was first held on May 1, but in A.D. 834 the celebration was altered to November 1, and in Great Britain it was assimilated in character to the old druidical feast, and called *Haligan* or *All Hallows.* In A.D. 993 the Feast of All Souls, kept on November 2 was added. The relics of fire-worship are the great characteristics of these festivals, which first symbolizing the cult of the sun-god, afterwards transferred themselves by analogy to the purgatorial flames from which the dead were released at this time to come and revisit the living.

In northern latitudes, the rising of the Pleiades was, in early times, mystically associated with the commemoration of the dead, and feasts of the dead are naturally to be looked for in the month of November, when these stars are visible all night and on the zenith at midnight. Despite its melancholy associations, All Hallows' Eve was

observed from early times with merriment and feasting. As a matter of fact, it would have been difficult to exclude mirth altogether from the household gatherings that marked the beginning of winter; and the opening of stores made in the summer was a natural occasion for a feast. The Romans at this time held a festival in honour of Pomona, the Goddess of Fruit, and it has been noted that fruits of the kind that can be best preserved till this season, as nuts, chestnuts, apples, play a very large part in the sports and spells of Hallows' Eve.

From the innumerable customs of the vigil we select some of the most representative. Those which are also practised on St. Agnes, St. Mark, Midsummer, and other magical times, are for the most part omitted.

The Hallows' bonfire was always a great feature in Celtic countries. In Perthshire, heath, broom, and flax were tied on a pole, set fire to, and carried round to kindle others. When the bonfire was out, the ashes were formed into a circle, in which were arranged a number of stones, corresponding to the number of persons who had been concerned in the bonfire. If any stone in the morning was found moved or defaced, the person whom it represented was called "fey," or doomed to death or disaster.

In Wales, a great fire was lighted by each household, and into its ashes each member of the company

threw a white stone, then all knelt in prayer round the dying fire before retiring to rest.

In his poem, "Hallow-e'en," Burns gives a vivid presentment of the way the vigil was celebrated in Scotland during the last century, in a typical farmhouse. He says the first ceremony of Hallow-e'en is the pulling of the kail. The lads and lasses must go hand in hand, with their eyes closed, and pull the first plant they meet. Its size, shape and texture indicate the appearance and disposition of the future wife or husband. The stems are hung in order over the door, and named according to the people who unexpectedly visit the house.

To eat an apple before a looking-glass will bring the wraith of your future mate to look over your shoulder. This, in Burns' poem, is deprecated by a grandmother in the company. It is an unholy spell, and equivalent to calling up "the foul thief"; a Scottish euphemism for the author of evil. Hazel-nuts or chestnuts placed on the bars of the grate will foretell the course of true love—"According as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another."

"Dipping the shift" is also a famous Hallow-e'en spell, but the shift or shirt must be immersed in a south-running rivulet, and in a place "where three lairds' lands meet." The wet linen must then be hung by a fire to dry, and the appearance of the future husband will come to turn it.

Again, three dishes may be set before the fire,

one holding clean water, another dirty, and another nothing at all. The person who wishes to try the spell must be blindfolded, and dip his hand by chance into one of the three. The clean water means a maiden bride; the soiled, a widowed; the empty dish, no bride at all.

The apparition of the future mate will also reward those who go to the barn, open its two doors wide, and, in the central space, go through the actions of winnowing. The third time this is done, the desired phantom will pass through the barn; in at one door and out at the other, bearing some emblem of the person's rank or trade.

Sowing hempseed, and winding a clew of yarn are also familiar charms practised at this, as at other seasons.

In Ireland, a cake called a *barm-brack* is always made containing a ring, which whoever gets in his or her slice, will be the first to be married.

Some very interesting customs seem to have been observed among the Roman Catholics in England at Hallowstide, either on Hallows' Eve or the evening of All Saints' Day.

The Tablet gives the following account of a Lancashire practice:

"*Eve of the first of November, or Tean Day.* (Tean we must say in explanation, would seem to be a corruption of the Celtic 'Tan' or 'Teinidh,' fire, or light).

"On this night, it was customary for Catholic

families in the district to assemble at midnight, outside their different farmsteads, one of the party holding up aloft, at the end of a long fork, a large bundle of ignited straw. The rest stood or knelt in a circle round, and prayed for the souls of their departed friends. William Bamber (aged eighty-three) in 1871, says the priest at the Laund, 'Father Lawrenson, used himself to hold the fork with the blazing straw, and was particular in making them pray as long as a spark remained.' The custom was observed in every Catholic farm in the district, but was gradually given up after the discontinuance of growing corn, from the difficulty of procuring straw. A few still keep up the old practice. Robert Dewhurst, the tenant of the Dairy Barn Farm, Leagram, does so every year. The ceremony generally took place on a hill, or rising ground, near the house. The same William Bamber remembered, when he was a young man and living at Whitingham, seeing large fires on the hill, blazing in every direction, forming a circle all round the horizon. A field in Alston, near the Catholic chapel, between Longridge and Preston, is called Purgatory Field. Other plots of land in the Fylde, and elsewhere in the county, are known by the same appellation. In these localities numbers of persons met at this time for the purpose related. They kindled fires on heaps of stones, and sometimes followed the pagan practice of running round, and through the fire."

Further references to these customs are given under "All Souls' Eve."

We may compare the custom—apparently not confined to Catholics, nor even consciously religious—which obtains in the parish of Findern, Derbyshire, of lighting small fires on the neighbouring furze common. These fires were locally called "tindles," and jestingly explained as "lighting souls out of Purgatory."

At St. Kilda's, a large furrowed cake used to be baked on Hallows' Eve. All of it had to be consumed the same night. Also the inhabitants of the island went through a curious ceremony of sacrificing to a sea-spirit, addressed as "Shony." They went down to the seashore, and threw a cup of ale into the sea, invoking "Shony" and asking him to give them "plenty of sea-ware;" in other words, luck with their fishing.

In the Isle of Man, Hallowtide is called *Hollantide*, and formerly began the year. We have here a tradition of the Celtic custom of beginning the year in November, instead of January, and an explanation of our own church's year, which begins in Advent—usually falling in November.

In Spain, the devout spend Hallows' Eve in seclusion and give themselves to prayer and to burning candles or oil-lights for the repose of the dead; or else visit churches and the cemetery where hundreds of blessed candles are offered and lit.

In Sardinia, on All Souls' Eve, many families

keep the custom of exposing outside the door of their houses jugs of water, so that souls in passing may quench their thirst. And for their own dead, a repast is prepared round the kitchen hearth—the scene of birth and death—and a light is left burning.

On the Adriatic coast, people go down to the seashore with lights to evoke the dead; perhaps, in particular, those who were drowned. Sometimes, instead, they hasten to church, on the understanding that whoever gets there first releases a soul from Purgatory.

Saffron cakes, emblematic of the purgatorial fires were eaten in England and Belgium, and called "Soul-Mass cakes."

November 1

ALL SAINTS' DAY took the place of a day celebrated by the pre-Christian Celts, not only as a fire-festival, but of the death ceremony of their saviour-god, Samhain. All fires were extinguished but the sacred fire, which householders obtained from the altars. Fruit and grain were the only offerings made to the "Lord of Death," who was the judge of souls, and dispenser of rewards and punishments in the world to come. On that night the living prayed for the dead, the Church adopting it as All Souls' Eve.

In the fourth century, in the Eastern Church, this feast was kept in the Octave of Whitsuntide.

In A.D. 731, Gregory III appointed its observance at its present date, but this did not become general until the ninth century.

The commemoration of "All the Saints who from their labour rest" fits in well with the Festival of the Dead, and does not disturb the general tenor of its customs. The evening of the feast-day is, indeed, commonly known as All Souls' Eve; or, as George Macdonald very aptly puts it in one of his eerie ballads:

> "The nicht *atween the Saints and the Souls*
> When the bodiless gang aboot."

Mr. W. Turner, of Whittle-le-Woods contributed to *The Tablet* in November 1909 a very interesting letter on a custom of All Souls' tide, with which he was himself familiar. He says:

"On All Souls' Eve or in the evening of All Souls' Day (I am uncertain which) my grandfather (born *circ.* 1770), a Lancashire Catholic and of Catholic stock, used to take a bundle of straw on a pitchfork (he was a farmer), and going to the highest point of land near the house, he threw the blazing mass skywards. Upon my father's asking the meaning of this, my grandfather replied that it was to represent the holy souls escaping from Purgatory to Heaven. I have had no confirmation of the former prevalence of this custom in these parts until recently, when an old Catholic lady told me she had heard of this practice in her youth. It

appears that short prayers were said while the straw was lit and thrown up, and the night was called 'teenling' (or 'teenly,' or possibly 'teendling') night.

"It has occurred to me that in some such custom as this we must look for the origin of the 5th of November bonfires. When one comes to think of it, there does not seem to be any special reason why a bonfire should commemorate Guy Fawkes' fiasco; but if the 2nd of November fire already existed, there is no difficulty in supposing that its significance was gradually lost among the mass of people along with the loss of the faith."

This letter evoked two very instructive replies, from which we make the following quotations. Mr. Joseph Gillow says:

"Mr. Turner is probably right in his conjecture that the ancient custom of waving blazing straw from elevated positions on the Eve of All Hallow was the origin of the 5th of November bonfires.

ALL HALLOW E'EN

"If you for me now do not pray,
The utmost farthing I must pay;
The time is hid, when I'll be rid,
Haste then to pity me."
(Haydock's Hymn for All Souls.)

"On the mystic evening of the last day of October, All Hallows' Eve, it was an ancient belief

that supernatural influence prevailed, and spirits, visible and invisible, revisited the scenes of their earthly existence. From Layton Hill to Pendle, Parlick-Pike and Beacon Fell, brightly shone the Tien-lowe, the 'sacred fire' of the Druids. On every hill throughout the Fylde, men stood in circles, raising aloft platted wisps of blazing straw on forks to ward off the *bar-gheist* or boggart. But in Catholic times the custom was observed with different meaning; it was to beg intercession for the souls of the faithful departed—the 'mournful fire,' reminding the faithful to pray for the souls in Purgatory."

And Mr. W. D. Gainsford of Skendleby follows with:

"Mr. Turner's account of this custom in Lancashire is interesting. The word, of course, is the Gaelic 'teine," fire. That the custom has latterly had relation to the Holy Souls is but another instance of the conversion of pagan rites to Christian purposes. The Guy Fawkes' bonfires, the 'teendling' fires, and a thousand other instances of fires kindled on or about the 2nd of November, date from a time before there was a Purgatory. To 'tind' a fire, and to 'tine' one's pipe are expressions still in use in the north-west of England."

November 2

ALL SOULS' DAY. A special "Day of the Dead" was not of very early observance in the

Christian Church. Among the Early Christians the names of the faithful departed were read aloud, for commemoration, at every celebration of the Eucharist, so that there seemed less need to set any day apart for prayer for their souls. But in the sixth century, the Benedictine monasteries set the fashion, by commemorating all the departed brethren of the Order in the Octave of Whitsuntide, thus linking them to the ancient commemoration of All Saints, and in the Spanish Church " a Memorial of All Souls " was observed about the same time.

According to the well-known story, St. Odilo, Abbot of Clugny is responsible for the commemoration of All Souls " on the morrow of the Feast of All Saints." He had had a vision of the suffering souls in Purgatory, which moved him to have Masses said on their behalf in all the churches affiliated to Clugny.

In Latin countries, the cult of the dead culminates on this third day of their commemoration. Troops of people may be seen in all the cemeteries decorating the tombs. In Greece, offerings of food are still given to the dead as in ancient times; but wreaths and flowers are the more usual substitutes for the old offerings, and performing processions round the cemeteries with lighted tapers, whence the month of November is called the " Month of pardons and indulgences for the Souls in Purgatory." In ancient times, both dead and living were said to be purified and purged of their

sins by sacrifices, flagellations, and works of mortification.

In Italy, the sacristans armed with bells and baskets go from door to door, begging for "*Sa mortù mortù.*" Dried fruits—almonds, figs, dates, etc.—are put into the baskets. They hold a feast at night, and leave the table spread ready for the dead, who are supposed to come back to see that all is prosperous in the house that night. This is a survival of a custom of offerings to the dead described in Homer, Odyssey xi, and is of course of far earlier origin, as we know from the food offerings in Egyptian and Assyrian tombs.

In Sicily, on All Souls' Day, cakes with images of skulls and skeletons are eaten. In these customs there is the survival of the old idea of renewing the unity of the clan on the death of one of its members.

In Naples, the family vaults used to be thrown open, lit, and decorated with flowers.

There is no doubt that the original idea underlying all these various ceremonials is that the spirits of the dead might be pacified, and prevented from haunting the living. The festivals to the dead are among the earliest in the world, and beginning with the idea of fear, and therefore of propitiation, in the food and other offerings supposed to be acceptable to them, has evolved the Christian belief that prayers will benefit their souls, and so to the still more exalted creed that dead and living are all one

great family in Christ, the belief culminating in the doctrine of the "Communion of Saints."

ALL SOULS' DAY IN BAVARIA. An eye-witness thus describes the celebration of the Day of the Dead in Bavaria, "in a little outlying district of beautiful Munich, typical of the rest."

"To-day the people were not in the town; they were north, south, east and west, making their pilgrimages to the cemeteries. Train, carriage, and foot had brought them here in thousands. They thronged through the great white building which stands at the entrance of the 'Friedhof.' Within, it was rich with frescoes; without, carved figured saints and wide-winged angels mounted as sentinels before the portals of death's domain.

"All day long men, women, and children had been hastening hither. They all had brought their gifts for this commemoration. Some came with wreaths almost as big as themselves; some with lanterns and cut or growing flowers. In crowds they came, a constant stream of human beings hurrying to keep high festival among their dead. The holiday-makers passed onward, with serious faces, to find just the one spot in all this decorated garden which was their special holy ground. They exchanged many greetings as they went; and sometimes they stopped a little, and from the stoop at a grave's foot, they sprinkled it with holy water, murmuring a 'Requiescat.'

"Down the long garden aisle came a slow procession. The tinkling bell drew nearer, the distant chant became louder. The lights of the acolytes, the incense of the censer-bearer, the white of the priest's robe could be seen across the beds of flowers. For a moment the buzz of conversation ceased. The people bent their heads and crossed themselves as the priest came onward, scattering far and wide the holy water and murmuring his benedictions on those distant ones, who, in their changed conditions, perchance had not ears to hear him.

"It was prayer time. The sun waned, twilight deepened, and then came darkness that left only the glimmer from the lamps, swinging above the white-strewn mounds, to indicate that it was 'All Souls' Eve.'" (*Everyman.*)

November 11

ST. MARTIN'S DAY, OR MARTINMAS. Very slight is the connexion between the customs of Martinmas and the saint whose name it bears. Born about the middle of the fourth century at Sabaria, in Pannonia, Martin was the child of heathen parents, but felt at an early age the fascination of Christianity, and the monastic life. He became a catechumen against his parents' wish; and so, when but fifteen, was seized by his father (himself a soldier) and enrolled in the army. One winter's day, when stationed at Amiens, he met a beggar almost naked and frozen with cold. Having

no money, he cut his cloak in two, and gave him half. That night he had a vision of Our Lord, clothed in the half-cloak, and heard him say to the angels, "Martin, yet a catechumen, hath wrapped Me in the garment." This decided him to be baptized, and shortly after he left the army. Driven from his home by the Arians, he took shelter with St. Hilary, and founded near Poitiers the first monastery in France. In A.D. 372 he was made Bishop of Tours. He destroyed the heathen temples and groves and is called the Apostle of Gaul.

Many miracles were attributed to Martin, and there was great anxiety on the part of various churches to possess his body, or a portion of it. He died on November 9, A.D. 401, and his feast-day is the anniversary of his burial at Tours. Seventy-two years after his death, his body was translated to a new and larger church, built to enshrine it, and this translation is commemorated on July 4.

Over the reputed site of his gift to the beggar at Amiens, a chapel, later, an abbey—"St. Martin aux Jumeaux"—was built. Some oil, supposed to have been sent from heaven to St. Martin was used at the coronation of Henry IV of France.

The festival of the saint was known in the Middle Ages as *Martinalia*. It superseded the *Vinalia*, or vintage feast of Ancient Rome, and the similar festival in honour of Dionysius or Bacchus, held by the Greeks, in the month *Anthesterion*. It was

naturally a time of rejoicing and household mirth. There would be the broaching of the first cask of that year's vintage, and much drinking of healths.

Brand speaks of a custom among boys of putting out vessels of water to be charged with wine, and of parents who humoured this expression of their wishes.

It was usual on St. Martin's Day to kill and salt down the provisions required for the winter; a fact often referred to in old couplets:

> " Martinmasse beef doth bear good tack
> When country folks do dainties lack."
>
> TUSSER.

> " Dried flitches of some smoked beeve
> Hanged on a writhen wythe since Martin's Eve."
>
> HALL.

In Northumberland it was once the fashion to club together, and buy a cow to salt down for the winter, this clubbing being known as a " Mart." Black puddings were made from a portion of the meat, and sent round to neighbours as presents.

Archæological research has led to the conclusion that Martinmas was, pre-eminently, the festival of the pastures and cattle, as contrasted with the festivals of the grain and fruits. Apparently rents for pasturage were collected at this time of year.

There is a landmark-cross on a mound in the

parish of Ryton-on-Dunsmore, near Coventry, where a curious ceremony of such rent-taking long survived.

At sunrise on St. Martin's Day, the steward of the Duke of Buccleuch repaired to this cross for the purpose of receiving the "wroth-" or "ward-" money due to the dukedom from the various parishes around. A survival of some accompanying religious ceremonial appeared in a threefold perambulation by the company, of the cross, as a prelude to the calling over of names. The ancient fine for default was a white bull with a red nose and ears; obviously, the pick of the defaulter's pastures.

But Martinmas has graver associations. In Scotland and Ireland it was sacred to the dead; the season chosen by ghosts for their return to familiar places, as in the ballad of "The Wife of Usher's Well":

"It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights were lang and mirk,
That the carline wife's twa sons came home,
And their hats were of the birk.

It neither grew on wold nor heath,
Nor yet on any sheugh,
But at the gates of Paradise
That birk grew fair eneugh."

In St. Peter's, Athlone, every family in the village on St. Martin's Day, kills an animal of some sort; the rich a cow or sheep, others a goose or

turkey; the poor a hen or cock, and the blood of the animal is sprinkled on the threshold and on the four corners of the house to exclude every kind of evil spirit for a year.

An interesting connexion of St. Martin's Feast with the memory of the dead is also shown in an eighteenth-century bequest to an English parish—that of Fenny Stratford, where the church has the dedication, St. Martin. Mr. Browne Willis, the famous antiquary, whose grandfather—Dr. Thomas Willis—had died in St. Martin's Lane on St. Martin's Day, 1695, bequeathed to Fenny Stratford parish, from which the family originally came, six carronades, which he requested should be fired every year on the anniversary of his grandfather's decease; a service to be held in the church, and a dinner given at the Bull Hotel. The carronades—which were of cast-iron, shaped somewhat like a jug, and about ten inches in length—went by the name of "Fenny Poppers."

We are indebted for this description to a writer * in the Church newspaper, *The Challenge*, to which paper the Vicar of Fenny Stratford also contributed a letter explaining that the "Fenny Poppers" were still fired, and the custom kept up as of old.

It is, of course, the *whole month of November* which is kept sacred to the dead. The Feast of Martinmas was in olden days a more important one than Michaelmas, which has appropriated some of

* Mr. C. J. Harper, *The Challenge*, June 1914.

its honours, including goose. We began by saying that St. Martin had but little responsibility for the customs of his day. It is but fair, however, to mention that an incident in his life—his reluctance to accept the bishopric of Tours—has been pressed into service to explain the popularity of Martinmas goose. Here is the versified legend:

"THE MARTIN-MASS GOOSE

"Martin, when through thin and thick
He would shun a Bishopric,
Hid him safe from sight and ken,
In a goose and gander-pen,
Till some gaggling bird let out
Secret of his whereabout.

"Now, because that *Gick-gack*-lay
Did this Holy Man bewray,
Goose in pen and goose on grass
Need beware of Martin-Mass.
Silly flock, the poulterer's knife
Seeketh for to take your life.

"Keep we therefore, as 'tis right
Customs old on Martin's Night,
Bid to supper on this Feast
Many a dear and welcome guest
Off Saint Martin's goose to dine
Music with, and cooling wine."
(*Zeitvertreiber*, A.D. 1700, by SIMON BACH; translated by G. R. WOODWARD.)

The association of goose with St. Martin's Day was a very close one, to judge by the evidence of a medal struck in France, and found in Denmark in A.D. 1700. The figure of a goose was on one side, and the word "Martinalia" on the other. With regard to the weather-lore of this time of the year, it is usually so dry and sunny round about the period of St. Martin's Day, that it is known by the title of "St. Martin's Summer."

November 23

ST. CLEMENT'S DAY. Very little is known of this bishop and martyr, but as a well-known writer says: "Imagination has spun a web of romance about his person."

He was a disciple of St. Peter, and is said to have succeeded that Apostle in the Bishopric of Rome. In the reign of Trajan there was a rising in the city against the Christians, and the Bishop, among others, was banished to Pontus, where he worked in the marble quarries, consoling his fellow Christians and converting many pagans. Finally he was martyred by being thrown into the sea by order of the Prefect, with an anchor attached to his neck. The Church of San Clemente in Rome enshrines some of his relics.

St. Clement has probably been chosen by blacksmiths as their patron on account of this tradition of an anchor being connected with his martyrdom.

At any rate the anchor's memory is preserved, with the mysterious honour always paid to such instruments, in the parish of St. Clement Danes. Here, an anchor is the weather-vane on the church-tower, and the minute-hand of the church clock is shaped like an anchor. Upon the boundary stones an anchor marks the parochial limits, and the same emblem was used to adorn the beadles' staves and the orphan children's dresses.

Much interest was excited some few years ago by a correspondence in *Folk Lore*, relating to the blacksmith's festival, held on November 23, and known as a "Clem Feast." One such feast used formerly to be held at Twyford, near Winchester, and we hear of a curious piece of "ritual" connected with it—the reading of the legend of "Solomon and the Blacksmiths." According to this narrative, Solomon gave a feast to all the labourers who had helped to build the temple, but refused to admit the blacksmiths, because they had not done any of the work. To this the smiths replied that they had, at least, made the tools with which the others worked. They were then bidden to the feast, washed themselves, and sat down with the rest.

Processions of blacksmiths on St. Clement's Day were practised within living memory, and they may, for all we know, survive still, here and there. Powder used to be exploded on the forges, and guns fired.

At Woolwich, the procession included representations of "Old Clem," as the smiths familiarly call their patron, of Britannia with her anchor, and so forth.

St. Clement is in no way connected with St. Catherine, but the two commemorations coming close together have been blended, in popular usage, into one. The following account, therefore, of the celebrations of St. Catherine's Day, must be taken, in part, to refer to St. Clement's. The custom of "Souling," for instance, was common to both days, and, in South Staffordshire, where this curious begging pilgrimage was made on St. Clement's Day, it was called "Clemenning"; in North Worcestershire, where it was made on St. Catherine's Day, two days later, it was known as "Catterning."

Children who "went a-souling" chanted the following rhyme:

"Soul! Soul! For a soul-cake
I pray, good misses, a soul-cake!
An apple, a pear, a plum, or a cherry
Any good thing to make us merry!
One for Peter, two for Paul,
Three for Him who made us all.
Up with the kettle, and down with the pan
Give us good alms, and we'll be gone."

Or this more peremptory one:

"If you're within
Open the door, and let us in,

And when we're in, we won't come out,
Without a red apple wrapped up in a clout."

The apples so obtained were usually roasted, and stuck with cloves.

In Sussex, yet another folk-rhyme links the two saints uncompromisingly. It runs thus:

" Cathern' and Clemmen' be here ! here ! here !
Give us your Apples, and give us your Beer,
One for Peter, one for Paul,
Three for Him who made us all.
Clemmen' was a good man,
Cathern' was his mother,
Give us your best, and not your worst
And God will give your soul good rest."

It hardly needs that significant final line to show the close connexion of " Clemenning " and " Catterning " with Hallowstide. The whole month of November was sacred to the memory of the dead, the welfare and repose of the souls of dead kinsmen would be the dominant thought in every one's mind. The begging of apples and beer was, undoubtedly, in the first instance, one method of obtaining contributions for a communal meal, or Feast to the Dead.

November 25

ST. CATHERINE'S DAY. St. Catherine has, as we have said, no connexion with St. Clement, save in the contiguity of their festivals.

She was a Christian virgin of the fourth century, who repulsed the dishonourable love of the Emperor Maxentius, and was by him condemned to death. A wheel set with razors was to have been the instrument of her martyrdom, but when she was placed on it, it broke, and the bystanders were wounded by the flying razors. She was then beheaded, and in answer to her prayer that unholy hands might never touch her, her body was said to have been carried by angels to Mount Sinai. Catherine is not generally called by her full style, Catherine of Alexandria, but it is sometimes necessary to distinguish her from her namesake of Siena.

Christian art often represents her in the act of receiving the nuptial ring from the infant Christ—she having been strengthened in her chastity by a vision of a mystical marriage with a heavenly bridegroom. In statues, and in a window in West Wickham Church, she is represented trampling the Emperor Maxentius, who is crouched beneath her feet like a dragon.

Catherine of Alexandria is, by a natural association of ideas, the patroness of unmarried women. When, in France, a girl remains long without a husband, she is said to "coiffer Sainte Catherine." The working girls of Paris attend in a body the Mass of St. Catherine's Day as their patronal festival. She it is who watches over their chastity, yet finds them honourable lovers, and happy marriages, if their destiny is wifehood.

We note again and again in the Calendar how the ascetic saints are associated with omens of love. In Ireland, women and girls used to fast on St. Catherine's Day to obtain "luck in marriage."

Here too is a charm for St. Catherine's Eve to be practised by not less than three and not more than seven girls, who must assemble together at eleven at night. Each is to take from her breast a sprig of myrtle which has been worn there all day, fold it in tissue paper, and throw it into a small chafing-dish of charcoal, together with nine hairs from her head and some parings of her nails.

Myrrh and frankincense are to be added. The girls must retire to bed at midnight, with the myrtles under their respective pillows, and the future husband will appear in dreams.

The following was an ancient prayer to St. Catherine:

"A husband, St. Catherine;
A good one, St. Catherine;
A handsome one, St. Catherine;
A rich one, St. Catherine;
And *soon*, St. Catherine."

St. Catherine, like St. Clement, had her procession at Woolwich. In 1825, she was represented by a man dressed in woman's clothes, with a large wheel at her side. Seated in a wooden chair, the figure was carried round the town, and largely attended.

An inn in the Borough bears the name of "Catherine Wheel," as also does a popular form of firework, which by its wild rotations, and flying weapon-like sparks unconsciously perpetuates the triumph of the saint, and the breaking of the instrument of her torture.

November 30

ST. ANDREW'S DAY. This saint is named by the Greeks the *Protoclete*, as he was the first-called to be an Apostle. He was a fisherman of Bethsaida; brother, perhaps the elder, of St. Peter, and disciple of St. John the Baptist. The Venerable Bede calls him the Introducer to Christ, because he was always eager to bring people to Jesus Christ. He went in search of Peter, and told him he had found the Messiah, and then took him to the Master. He pointed out the lad who had the five loaves and two fishes from which our Lord fed the five thousand listeners to whom he had been preaching. In many ways he takes the lead.

Perhaps it was for this reason that St. Andrew's Day and its octave had once a much more prominent place in popular religion than is the case now. Something of its importance survives in the Calendar direction that Advent Sunday shall always be the Sunday nearest to the Feast of St. Andrew, either before or after. It enjoys the distinction of being sometimes the last, sometimes the first, Saint's Day in the Christian year.

At Wells, Somerset, where the Cathedral Church is dedicated to Saint Andrew, and the cross decussate, the instrument of his martyrdom, is introduced into the architecture of the transepts, a fair, known as St. Andrew's Fair, is held during the Octave; formerly in the cathedral precincts, and in modern times at the end of the street leading to the precincts. Its religious character is, of course, lost sight of; but even in its secularized form, the survival is of interest.

At Eastling, Kent, the labourers used formerly to make holiday on St. Andrew's Day and go out on a squirrel-hunt. A good deal of damage was usually done to property, and the evening was spent in the ale-house. When the coppices were enclosed, this undesirable custom fell into disuse.

Scotsmen residing in London formerly held a procession on St. Andrew's Day, and singed sheep's heads were carried before them, in allusion to the favourite Scots dish.

The association between St. Andrew and Scotland, whose patron saint he is, is explained thus:

In A.D. 363, a certain abbot, called Regulus, brought, either from Patras or Constantinople, some relics of St. Andrew, and placed them in a church where the city of St. Andrews and its university now stands. It was a great place for pilgrimages, and became an archbishopric. The cross to which the saint, after a cruel scourging, was tied, and on which he hung for two days preaching

before he died, was said to have been brought from Achaia, and to be now in the monastery of St. Victor at Marseilles. Part of it, however, is said to have been carried to Brussels by Philip the Good; who in honour of it founded the Order of the Golden Fleece, whose badge is a St. Andrew's cross.

There is an Order in Freemasonry dedicated to "St. Andrew of the Rosy Cross," which is the highest Order attainable. The knights who are to undergo the ceremony of initiation, being required to pass through a dark chamber hung with black, typifying the death of Christ and His descent into Hell, after which they are invested with the crimson sash and jewel of the Order, and partake of a sacramental meal together.

The collar of the Order of St. Andrew in Scotland is composed of thistles and rue; the thistle, as the well-known motto reminds us, "cannot be touched with impunity," and the rue is supposed to be an antidote against poison.

The Muscovites have a tradition that St. Andrew preached among them, and he is responsible for the institution of a Russian Order of the Blue Ribbon, founded by Peter the Great.

His day was considered favourable for the taking of love-omens. Naogeorgus, translated by Googe, says: "To Andrew all the lovers and lusty wooers came"; and there is a Latin prayer in which St. Andrew is requested to show to the maiden who

recites it the form of her future husband. (*Hodie mihi ostende qualis sit cui me in uxorem ducere debet.*)

The association of St. Andrew with love-omens is to be explained by the fact that in Great Britain as well as other countries, he succeeded to the honours paid to Freyr, the Norse God of Marriage, the brother and consort of Freyja, the Goddess of Love. Black cats were sacred to her, and this throws light on the following superstitious practice:

In Sieradz, Poland, on St. Andrew's Eve, girls take a black cat and hold it over the fire, at the same time throwing barley into the fire, and saying: "Barley, burn! Cat, mew! And let my dear one come!"

St. Andrew seems also to be associated with the discovery of witches. At least, there is an Austrian tradition that a branch of apricot-flower, worn at the Mass of St. Andrew's Day, will reveal to the wearer all the witches in the congregation.

In Greece, this day is one of the Calendar Days of the dead, and offerings of cakes (specially made for the occasion) and of fruit are laid upon the graves.

December 6

SAINT NICHOLAS'S DAY. Saint Nicholas is probably the most popular saint in Christendom. Legend has been busy in his honour, as we realize

when we come to compare the traditional lore that centres round his name with the few facts actually known about him.

He was Bishop of Myra in the fourth century; and is said to have been a native of Patara, in Lycia, Asia Minor.

In his childhood a prodigy of holiness, he early began to work miracles, and was withal so pious that he refused his mother's milk on fast days! Whilst a young man in Patara, an angel revealed to him by a dream that a certain poor nobleman of the town was desperately in need of money to endow his three daughters, whom he was unable to give in honourable marriage. The saint then went to the house secretly and threw in at the window three bags of gold, sufficient to provide a good dowry for each damsel, so ensuring for them a husband and a virtuous life. It was these three purses of gold that legend transformed into the famous "Three Golden Balls," which the Lombard money-lenders adopted as their sign, and which hang to this day over the pawnbrokers' shops of England.

St. Nicholas is thence the patron of virgins and widows. He advises in the choice of a good husband; but if a woman prefers to remain unwed, he helps her to earn an honest living.

The saint's duties as patron by no means end there. We are all familiar with the curious pictures of him, standing, in full pontificals, beside a pickling tub, from which emerge the heads of three children.

These illustrate the well-known story that St. Nicholas restored to life three schoolboys who had been murdered by the host of the inn where they had put up for the night, on their way to prosecute their studies at Athens. The saint, being informed by a vision, of the atrocity that was being committed, repaired to the inn, and, though the unfortunate boys had been already dismembered and put into a pickling tub, his prayers availed to raise them up. He is, for this cause, the patron and protector of schoolboys and of children generally, and also from the circumstances related, of travellers.

A curious school custom illustrates the honour in which his name was held. It was sufficient, when one desired a moment's respite in a game to exclaim "Nic'las!" and truce was granted at once.

It is well known that scholars were formerly called *clerks*. This has caused St. Nicholas's protection to be extended to that almost extinct class of worthies, parish-clerks!

He is also, all over the world, called the patron of thieves, who in Henry IV, Part I, are euphemistically alluded to as "St. Nicholas's clerks." This is because of a story that the good bishop converted a band of robbers and induced them to restore their booty.

We have already said that St. Nicholas is the patron of children in general. As the "Santa

Klaus" of Holland, Germany, and Russia, he personifies the Christmas spirit. His world-wide identification with "Father Christmas" seems to have originated with the conversion of the Teutons to Christianity. The Scandinavian God Woden or Odin was believed to bestow special gifts at Yuletide to those who honoured him by approaching his sacred fir-tree. He was assisted in his benevolent distributions by the Goddess Bertha and attendant sprites. Converts to Christianity could not easily resign this pleasant idea; and in their new faith it was natural to associate it with the name of a saint who had the reputation of generosity. The secretive manner of Santa Klaus in bestowing his gifts—thrusting them unseen into stockings or shoes, and coming unseen down the chimney—is, of course, in allusion to the secret dower to the nobleman's daughters of Patara.

The curious mediæval custom of a boy-bishop chosen by his fellow-choristers in cathedral choirs, and performing pontifical duties in a kind of burlesque, not then considered irreverent, is connected with St. Nicholas's patronage of children. The election of "the bishop" took place on St. Nicholas's Day, and his term of office lasted till December 28—the Feast of the Holy Innocents. (Vide *Childermas*. Page 255.) The details of outward semblance were carefully carried out, and the pageantry of the boy-bishop's processional was very impressive. Boy-bishops, if they died during

their term of office, had the privilege of being buried in full pontificals. In Salisbury Cathedral is a small sarcophagus believed to have been made for a boy-bishop, and there are several others in other places, supposed to have belonged to these bishops who died during their term. The Salisbury tomb has a representation of a childish figure in bishop's vestments. On Childermas Day, at the end of his term of office, "the bishop" had to deliver a sermon. These ceremonies seem to date back to the ninth century. They were abolished in A.D. 1542, as "a superstitious observance," but traces of them survived in the Eton *Montem*. Suffice it to say that military accoutrements and dress took the place of ecclesiastical in the modern pageant; and when Queen Charlotte, wife of George III, protested against the representation of a "chaplain"—or perhaps, to do her justice, against the attendant buffoonery—for the "chaplain," having read prayers, had to kick his "clerk" down the hill—the last reminiscence of the mediæval idea faded from the practice. The *Montem* has been, we believe, revived in late years, but it usually takes place at Whitsuntide.

Most people know how frequently churches dedicated to the Bishop of Myra are found on the sea-coast, or near the sea. While Nicholas was making a voyage to the Holy Land, a violent tempest overtook the ship. The saint offered fervent prayers, the tempest abated, and the

grateful ship's company ascribing their deliverance to him, caused him to be hailed as the patron and protector of sailors.

Greek mariners carry an icon of St. Nicholas in their boats; and it is easy to see how, for early Christian converts, he would take, to a certain degree, the place of Neptune. In Southern Europe, his sea-coast chapels are full of votive offerings—very similar to those that were hung up of old in the temples of "the stern god of sea."

A cult of St. Nicholas exists at Bari, in South Italy. Here his relics were brought by the Normans, in A.D. 1087; and here is his shrine. The rock from which the shrine is hewn exudes water, which is sold to pilgrims as a specific, and called "St. Nicholas's manna." Pilgrims make the circuit of the church on their knees.

December 21

ST. THOMAS'S DAY. According to tradition, St. Thomas, after the solving of his doubts, became an active missionary. He preached the gospel, after the Ascension, to the Medes, Persians, Ethiops and Bactrians, but his chief work was in India, where he was martyred; or, according to one legend, accidentally killed by an arrow which a Hindu archer had aimed at a peacock, striking him in the heel. He was buried at Melapoor, in a church he had himself built, which became a

famous place of pilgrimage—devotees collecting the red earth around it, to use as a specific.

Mandeville gives a wonderful account of miracles worked at St. Thomas's tomb, by that hand of the Apostle which he thrust into the side of Christ. Placed in a vessel outside the tomb, the hand had a supernatural power of judging quarrels. The disputants would place, each, the bill of his cause in the hand, and it would reject the less worthy.

St. Thomas's Day is, of course, the beginning of the winter solstice. As the folk couplet has it:

> " St. Thomas grey, St. Thomas grey,
> Longest night and shortest day ! "

Legend connects with this the doubting Apostle's name of Didymus, or twin. The day and night, at his feast, may be spoken of as " twins "—that is as scarcely recognizable the one from the other.

In the stone-circle of Stonehenge two stones, at a little distance from the altar, are associated with the rites of this day. One marks the apparent place of the sun's rising, the other of his setting on December 21.

The Christian commemoration of the day dates from the twelfth century.

We can hardly speak of the customs of St. Thomas's Day apart from those of Christmas. The association is very close ; for the pre-Christian feast of the Solstice has naturally left its mark on

the Saint's Day as well as on the Feast of the Nativity.

In Belgium, children on St. Thomas's Day, shut or bar the house-door upon their parents, and refuse to open it until they have obtained a promise of goodies.

In some parts of Brabant, it is the apprentices who shut out their masters, and will not let them in again till they have been promised this or that advantage. In Bruges, where this practice obtains both with children and apprentices, a special verb—*thomassen*—has been created to describe it.

A still more unpleasant kind of baiting is practised in Alost, Belgium, and other parts of Flanders. Students surprise their professor, bind him in his chair, and carry him off to the wine-shop, where only the most liberal "treating" will secure his release.

With all this we may compare the old English custom of "gooding" practised on St. Thomas's Day. "To go a-gooding" was to make a pilgrimage from house to house, collecting money and anything else the villagers would give. In return, the donors were presented with a sprig of holly or mistletoe.

In Harrington, Worcestershire, the children went a-gooding to the accompaniment of this rhyme:

"Wassail, wassail through the town;
If you've got any apples, throw them down,

Up with the stocking, and down with the shoe;
If you've got no apples, money will do.
The jug is white, and the ale is brown,
This is the best house in the town."

In Staffordshire, the gifts were under ecclesiastical superintendence. Either the incumbent of the parish made a present of a shilling to each parishioner, or a collection was made and distributed in church on the Sunday nearest to St. Thomas's Day, under the name of " St. Thomas's Dole."

Closely akin to this was the carrying about of what was called " the Advent Images " ; a kind of itinerant Christmas crib. The images—of Christ and His Mother—were carried in a box wreathed in evergreens, and anyone to whose house they were taken could pluck and keep a leaf of the evergreens, which was said to be remedy against toothache.

It is natural to suppose that the day now sacred to St. Thomas was marked of old with the savage rites inseparable from the worship of the sun-god. Pale survivals of these may be traced. (1) In the Ardennes, where the school children make little paper figures of cocks, and burn them under the school windows. (2) In the neighbourhood of Contich, where schoolmasters, until about sixty years ago, used, by immemorial custom of St. Thomas's Day, to present their scholars with a cock and hen, for slaughtering by decapitation.

December 24

CHRISTMAS EVE. Christmas Eve has many quaint and charming customs in all parts of Europe, to usher in the great festival. Herrick gives some superstitions connected with this time:

CHRISTMAS EVE

"Come guard this night the Christmas-Pie,
That the thiefe, though ne'r so slie,
With his Flesh-hooks, don't come nie
To catch it.

"From him, who all alone sits there,
Having his eyes still in his eare,
And a deale of nightly feare
To watch it."

ANOTHER TO THE MAIDS

"Wash your hands, or else the fire
Will not teend to your desire;
Unwashed hands, ye Maidens, know,
Dead the Fire, though ye blow."

ANOTHER

"Wassail the Trees, that they may bear
You many a Plum, and many a Pear:
For more or less Fruits they will bring,
As you do give them Wassailing."

"My Italian Year" by Richard Bagot, gives some nativity customs. In Rome, in former times, the shepherds were wont to descend from the mountains round, at Christmas-time with their bagpipes, and on Christmas Eve the *pifferari* played pastoral melodies in honour of the Holy Child, a custom now obsolete.

Christmas Eve is a strict fast day, and fish is exposed for sale in the markets in huge quantities, the whole night preceding the fast. On that day also the *Presepi* or Holy Cribs are visited by vast multitudes.

There is a belief in Sologne, France, that all domestic animals, such as dogs, cats, pigs, horses, cows, &c., become possessed of human speech from the midnight of Christmas Eve to the mid-day of Christmas Day.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOM IN EXETER CATHEDRAL. At midnight of Christmas Eve it was formerly the custom for the choir of Exeter Cathedral to go up into the Minstrels' Gallery there, and sing the *Gloria in Excelsis.*

We take the following from *T.P.'s Weekly*:

"*KYVLATH.* Christmas-time, of course, abounds in quaint customs in all countries, not the least charming of which is the old Welsh ceremony of toffee-making on Christmas Eve. Imagine the scene. About ten o'clock at night a merry company

is seated round a big red fire whiling away the time chatting, propounding riddles, and singing folk songs or national airs. If there is a broad expansive hearthstone it has been specially cleaned, otherwise a large slate slab is similarly prepared and placed on the floor in the centre of the circle. Presently the hostess enters and begins to mix the ingredients for the toffee according to a secret family recipe. She proceeds with the special brass pan to the fire, and as she carefully stirs, and watches, and tests the toffee (called *kyvlath*) from time to time, there is a deep silence lest the magic spell, necessary for success, should be broken. At a sign from the lady some one smears the slate slab generously with butter, and the toffee is carefully poured on it, where it spreads like a dark mysterious pool in a shady grove. While it cools and hardens, weird and creepy ghost stories are related, followed by more singing and more fun. Somewhere about midnight the *kyvlath* is broken up and distributed among the company before they disperse, after singing the National Anthem, some home and to bed, others to join the carol singers. It is indeed one of those charming customs which brighten and beautify the lives of the people in the midst of these strenuous and materialistic times."

Yet, for all this, there are some gloomy and contradictory superstitions about Christmas-tide lingering in popular folk-lore. For instance, in Greece the belief is almost universal that during

the period between Christmas Eve and Epiphany—*i.e.* during the ancient winter festival season—supernatural beings are present upon earth with unusual powers. The usual name for these spirits is *Kallikantzaroi*. The main idea is that they are the disembodied spirits of men, who because they were born between Christmas and Epiphany are endowed with this power. They roam by night causing annoyance, but not danger, to their fellow-men. In appearance they are hideous, unkempt, and in rags, and may be compared to goblins and were-wolves. The chimney is their favourite entrance to a house, and pork their favourite food.

The methods employed against the *Kallikantzaroi* present a curious mixture of the Christian and Pagan. Fires and lights are thought to be potent deterrents. Cakes are also made for the spirits, and a sieve is put as a charm. Children born on Christmas Day are, for this reason, subjected to drastic exorcising, such as an ordeal by fire, and their baptism must be immediate.

The Christmas masqueraders dressed in animal skins are supposed to represent these demons of the winter solstice; and the jangling of their bells to frighten the real demons away.

December 25

CHRISTMAS DAY. The most widely-observed festival of modern times was not the most ancient

of the Christian Church. The Epiphany as a church festival long precedes the keeping of Christmas. But the necessity for such a festival arises from the fact that in both north and south Europe, existed from pre-historic times the great old feasts of the winter solstice. In Scandinavia, the great feast of Yule with all its various ceremonies, had celebrated the birth of the winter sun-god. In the Latin countries there had reigned *Saturnalia*, a cult of the god Saturn. The date December 25, coincided also with the birth of Attis, a Phrygian cult of the sun-god, introduced into Rome under the Empire. The popular feasts attached to the births of other sun-gods such as Mithras, were also invariably celebrated at the time of the winter solstice. So that a general consensus of popular feeling contributed to place the birth of our Lord, not distinctively associated in the gospels with any particular time of year, in mid-winter, and by the middle of the fourth century, when the Emperor Julian went to church in state to celebrate the birth of Christ, the festival as we know it became established.

To revert to pre-Christian festivals, *Saturnalia* began on December 17, and usually extended to seven days. It has left more traces in mediæval and modern customs than any other Roman festival. The festival was a return to the Golden Age in popular belief. Saturn was originally a god of seeds and produce of all kinds. On December

18 and 19, which were general holidays, the day began with an early bath, then followed the family sacrifice of a sucking-pig, alluded to by Horace (Odes iii, xviii). Then came calls on friends, congratulations, games, and the presentation of gifts. All kinds of presents were made, among them wax candles, in fancied allusion to sun-worship. The use of these descended into the Christmas ritual of the Latin Church. *Sigillaria*, or little paste images (sometimes of earthenware), survived also in the Roman Calendar, and have even been found in England. The exchange of place by masters and slaves was considered reminiscent of the Golden Age.

In Scandinavia, England, and North Germany, there was a festival—Yule—towards the close of December in honour of Freyr, the God of Golden Sunshine. In England the name Christmas superseded Yule, by which name the day and season are still known in Scandinavia, the root of which is perhaps cognate with Greek *Helios*, and O.E. *Ƴoullm*, to sing, and *Gylan*, to make merry. Freyr represented light, love, peace, goodwill and fertility —his shining sword was brandished against the frost giants. His sacred animal was Gullinbursti, the golden-bristled boar, symbolical of the sun-rays or the furrows of the golden grain, ploughed by his tusks. Mounted on Gullinbursti, fabled to be swifter than a horse, the sun-god made his daily course east and west. While at the winter solstice,

it was customary to serve up a holy supper consisting of boar's head to Freyr and Freyja, his sister or consort, called *Sönurgaltr*, which may mean " Boar of Atonement " or the " Sun-Boar." In the Eddic song of Helgi, the partakers in the feast placed their hands on the victim and vowed. It is said that in Oster-Gothland the following ceremony is still observed on Yule Eve. The house-father places his hands upon the block of wood covered with a pig-skin called *julbucken*, and swears to be a kind master and good father through the coming year. The pig which trots in the Transylvanian Christmas procession is a survival of the sun-worship rites. The same origin is assigned to the yearly boar's-head banquet on Christmas Day at Queen's College, Oxon.—a survival of the sacred meal to Freyr. It was also once customary at St. John's, Cambridge, Inns of Court, and Queen Victoria's table, and formerly universal in Scandinavia, England, Iceland and North Germany.

The Christmas tree originating in the world-ash of Scandinavia (erroneously termed Ygdrasil) is closely connected with Christmas flowering trees of all kinds—the Glastonbury Thorn being one example. It was usual to give a paradise play at Christmas in the Middle Ages on *Adam and Eve's Day*, the day before Christmas Day: another tree association. It recapitulates the idea of tree-worship, and the universe-tree—lights, flowers, and gilded nuts and balls symbolizing the sun, while

red and golden apples are a survival of the myth of Iduna, the Goddess of Youth and Health, with her world-apples keeping the gods ever young and immortal.

The Christmas tree is thus peculiar to Northern Europe, and many other customs which we keep up in connexion with the birthday of our Lord properly belong to the pre-Christian festivals, which very naturally were more important in the North than in the South of Europe, and so occasions of greater rejoicing.

Old Yule was thus kept, according to the *Heimskringla :*

" King Hakon was a well-christened man when he came to Norway, but whereas all the land was heathen, and much given to sacrificing, he took such rede that he fared privily with his Christian faith : Sunday he held, and Friday fast, and he held in memory the great high-tides, and he made it a law that Yule should be holden, the same time, as Christian men held it, and that every man at that tide should brew a meal of malt or pay money else, and keep holy tide while Yule lasted. But aforetime was Yule held on Hogmanay night, that is to say, midwinter night, and Yule was holden for three nights.

" Earl Sigurd upheld all feasts of blood-offering there in Throndheim on the king's behoof. It was the olden custom that when a blood-offering should be, all the bonders should come to the place

where was the temple, bringing with them all the food they had need of while the feast should last, and at that feast all men should have all with them. Also slain cattle of every kind, and horses, and all the blood that came from them was called *blaut*, but *blaut-bowls* were they called, wherein the blood stood, and the *blaut-tein*, a rod made in the fashion of a sprinkler. With all the *blaut* should the stalls of the gods be reddened, and the walls of the temple within and without, and the men folk also be sprinkled, but the flesh was to be sodden for the feasting of man. Fires were to be made in the midst of the floor of the temples with caldrons thereover, and the health-cups should be borne over the fire. But he who made the feast was lord thereof, and should sign the cups, and all the meat, and the first drunken was Odin's cup, for the victory and dominion of the king, and then the cup of Niord, and the cup of Freyr for plentiful seasons and peace. There were many wont to drink the Bragi-cup (heirs' cup) and men drank also a cup to their kinsmen dead who had been noble, and that was called the cup of Memory."

St. Augustine, the Apostle of England, gave Christian sanction to the winter festivities held in honour of Freyr, changing them from heathen orgies into Christian rejoicings.

" Augustine blessed with lifted hand
The Ancient Revels of our land

With Holy Water washed divine
Old Canterbury's heathen shrine,
And consecrated in fair Kent
To Christ her pagan merriment."

C. E. Byles.

An order given by Pope Gregory in A.D. 601, to Bishop Mellitus in Britain, makes clear the general policy:

"Let the shrines of idols by no means be destroyed but let the idols which are in them be destroyed. Let water be consecrated and sprinkled in these temples; let altars be erected and relics laid upon them, so that the people, not seeing their temples destroyed, may displace error, and recognize and adore the true God. . . . And because they were wont to sacrifice oxen to devils, some celebration should be given in exchange for this, as that on the day of dedication, or the nativity of the martyrs, they should build houses out of tree-branches, and celebrate a religious feast, and no longer offer beasts to devils, but kill cattle and worship God by their feasting, so that still keeping outward pleasures, they may more readily receive spiritual joys."—*Bede, Eccl. Hist.*, 1.30.

As the Christian cenutries have come and gone, all the festivities of the winter solstice have been absorbed into Christmas Day, and every one of the current practices, best known to us, dates back, in some way to the older faiths—the use of holly

and mistletoe to the druidic ceremonies; the Christmas tree to the honours paid to Odin's sacred fir; the burning of the Yule-log to the inevitable bonfire of sun-worship.

In the traditions which surround the Christmas pudding we trace the influence of the Chaldean astrologers, who believed that the first twelve days of the year foreshadowed the events and fate of the coming twelve months; each day corresponding to a month. It is the Christmas pudding that is the mascot or luck-bringer for every individual, as shown by the superstition that it is unlucky to eat it *before* Christmas Day, and that in the days following every pudding sampled will bring good fortune for a month.

So one should taste, at least, twelve puddings, preferably those made by friends or neighbours. Any wish expressed whilst eating the first mouthful will be fulfilled during the year. The same applies to mince-pies.

In Cornwall it is customary to make a batch of currant cakes for Christmas Eve. These are coloured with saffron; a small portion of the dough in the centre of each is pulled up to make a very small cake on the top of a large one and this top is called "the Christmas." Each person has his own cake, and every one ought to taste a bit of every one else's cake. The cakes must not be cut before Christmas Day.

In Sussex, the Christmas cakes are kept for twelve

months to ensure the year's luck. In Glamorganshire, they make " finger-cakes "—cakes in the shape of a hand, bearing a bird on the back of it.

In Wiltshire, there was a Christmas cakelet called " cop-a-loaf," which was shaped like a box, with a cock's head on top, and contained an apple. Cop-a-loaves used to be placed (says one of the recipients) at the bedside of the children on Christmas morning.

These cakes of curious or doubtful shape are, usually, no doubt, a reminiscence—unconscious enough !—of human or animal sacrifices. For the " dummy " was, as we know, one of the earliest humane devices for satisfying the instincts of the worshipper, without the taking of life.

Still more obvious survivals are the so-called " Yule dows " or " Yule babies " ; little cakes of dough, shaped like an infant, and once very popular in Northumberland. With these we may compare the little images of paste, moulded in the same form, and exchanged, as Christmas gifts, among the ecclesiastics of Rome.

At Queen's College, Oxford, the following lines are still sung :

1. " The Boar's Head in hand bear I
Bedecked with bays and rosemary,
And I pray you, my masters, be merry,
Quot estis in convivio
Caput Apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.

2. "The Boar's Head as I understand,
Is the bravest dish in all the Land,
When thus bedecked with a gay garland
Let us servite cantico,
Caput Apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.

3. "Our steward hath provided this
In honour of the King of Bliss,
Which on this day to be served is
In Reginensi Atrio,
Caput Apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino."

With the vows of knighthood made on the boar's head, we may compare the mediæval oath over that famous Christmas dainty—peacock-pie. The peacock came to table in the full glory of its feathers, and with its beak gilded. No common hand could serve this dish. It was the lady most distinguished in the company for beauty and high birth, who bore the noble bird into the dining-hall. Over the peacock-pie, the knights made vows to break spear in defence of beauty and distress, a ceremony which gave rise to the once popular oath "By cock and pie!" which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Justice Shallow.

After the oaths were taken, a tournament proved the faith of those who had sworn, and the peacock-pie was duly eaten at the banquet which followed.

Possibly some mystical reason blended with the eating of this dish at Christmas feasts. There is a very old popular belief that the flesh of the peacock is incorruptible. It was thus a symbol of immortality, of new life; and of the divine humanity whose coming into the world was commemorated at this time.

At Hornchurch, Essex, the lessees of the tithes of the church had, every Christmas, to provide a boar's head, which was dressed and garnished with bay; and given as the prize of a wrestling match, held in a field adjoining the church.

The hobby-horse—represented by two actors in a horse's skin and hoop—was a familiar figure in Old English Christmas mummeries. This is, of course, a survival of the worship of Odin, to whom the horse was sacred, and to whom the Saxons sacrificed horses, making banquets afterwards of horse-flesh.

At Ramsgate, Kent, a curious custom was formerly observed at Christmas by the young people. The head of a horse was fixed on a pole, and a string attached to the lower jaw. With this, the youths and maidens went in procession from house to house, jingling bells, and making the jaw work up and down, in supposed life-like fashion. Here we have certainly a reminiscence of a form of worship which would, naturally, have taken strong hold in Kent. It was on a white horse that Odin made his descent to earth, to bless mankind, at his sacred season of Yule.

In Cornwall, parties of men dressed up in various disguises, animals' heads, &c., paraded the streets, and were known as goose-dancers or guise-dancers, a well-known character being the hobby-horse, a survival of the mediæval mummers.

In Sussex at Christmas, in my youth I remember the "mummers" in white suits adorned with coloured rags, and tall hats, used to come round and act the mumming play of "St. George and the Dragon." Another Christmas mumming play was known as "Duffy and the Devil," the tale of an old woman who sells herself to the Devil if he will do her spinning for her. He was to claim her in three years if she could not find out his name, which of course she does by stratagem, as in other old folk-lore tales.

YULE-LOG. We have already referred to the Yule-log as a probable variant of the bonfire, so characteristic of sun-festivals. But it has some interesting folk-lore of its own.

In mediæval England, its duration coincided with the Christmas revels. As long as it burnt, the tenant had a right to feed at his lord's expense. The log was often cut from an ash-tree—the sacred tree of our Saxon forefathers. There is a gipsy legend that Our Lord was born in a field, and brought up by an ash-fire.

The log should, properly, be lighted with a portion of last year's log; a piece of which is always

supposed to be preserved for luck. At the same time that the Christmas fire was lit, the Christmas candle had to be lighted. (A portion of last year's taper had also to be kept.) It was unlucky to snuff the Christmas candle, which burnt for twelve days—the period of festivity. At St. John's College, Oxford, can still be seen the ancient stone socket with the Agnus Dei stamp, in which the Christmas candle was placed on the high table.

In the Isle of Man, the folk formerly carried long tapers to church on Christmas Eve.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS. The custom of dressing the houses and churches with evergreens on Christmas Eve accords very well with the Christian tradition of the circumstances of the holy birth; but it is, nevertheless, most undoubtedly a pre-Christian practice. It was much in favour with the Druids, who saw in it a way of protecting and of inviting the protection of those kind woodland spirits who found their accustomed haunts bare.

Of the mistletoe, though now out of favour in modern churches, we hear that it symbolized particularly the coming of a Saviour. For this cause, the priestly band went out to search for it carefully, and brought it home in triumph. The Christian prejudice against it (perhaps a survival of the belief that it had caused the death of Baldur) does not appear to have been always so virulent.

It was once the custon to offer it on the high altar of York Minster, with a benediction and a prayer for peace and goodwill.

Peace and goodwill are, of course, the great keynotes of this winter festival, which is the pledge and earnest of all subsequent feasts. And Christmas luck is proverbial. Tradition has it that no one born at this time will ever come to be hanged or drowned.

> "No fairy hurts, or witch has power to charm,
> So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

We have already spoken of the connexion of the Christmas tree with the sacred fir of Odin, and we have already seen that, according to some authorities, a variant of the sacred ash-tree—Ygdrasil—which grows at the roots of the world. Closely associated with this Scandinavian "Tree of Life" are the traditions of the various trees that, like the Glastonbury thorn, are thought to blossom at Christmas time.

Tree-worship has left faint yet unmistakable traces on Christmas customs. We have, for instance, the mediæval "paradise play" of Christmas Eve, which featured the plucking of the forbidden fruit, and from which Christmas Eve got the title "Adam and Eve's Day."

The custom of "wassailing the apple-trees" persisted to modern times. In Devonshire and

Sussex, a troop of boys visited the orchards, and encircling the trees, sang:

> "Stand fast, bear well crop,
> Pray God send us a howling crop;
> Every twig apples big,
> Every bough apples enough;
> Hats full, caps full,
> Fuller quarter sacks full."

Even clearer traces of tree-worship are perceptible in the Devonshire practice of offering cakes and cider to the trees—placing the cake in the fork of the boughs and throwing the cider over them.

In some counties, beehives are wassailed, and the wassailing season lasts from Christmas Eve to Twelfth Day. In its deteriorated form it is, no doubt, merely an excuse for potations!

Holly was sacred to Saturn, and it has been conjectured that early Christians might have used it in the decorations of their houses, as a precautionary measure; an outward conforming to the honours paid to Saturn in the month of December.

There is a curious old superstition that it was unlucky not to have both prickly and smooth holly in the house at Christmas together, at the same time; for if the prickly leaves came first, the husband would get all things, throughout the year, his own

way, and if the smooth leaves gained precedence, the wife's rule would be absolute.

NATIVITY CUSTOMS: THE CHRISTMAS CRIB. The setting up of the *Presepio* or Holy Crib, still observed in Catholic churches in all parts of the world, is a peculiarly important ceremony in Southern Europe.

In the neighbourhood of Marseilles, special fairs are held at the beginning of December for the sale of various "furniture" for the crib. Here the devout peasant will buy cork and oak-bark to represent the Inn of Bethlehem, sand and moss with which to cover the paths leading to the Inn, branches of pine and olive for the tree in which the plaster dove, representing the Holy Spirit, will be placed; and stars of gilded paper to put over the Manger. Last but not least, he will provide himself with those figures of plaster known as *sautons*, from which the fair gets its name, and the crib its realism. For Christmas, only figures of the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the ox and ass will be necessary; but later, there will be *sautons* of the three kings, in superb costumes, and with their gilded crowns, their camels and their offerings. Nor is it only the Magi who bring gifts. All Provence flocks to the crib; and each worshipper brings some characteristic oblation—the miller his sack of flour, the peasant his fowls, the housewife her Christmas cake, and so on. These cribs are domestic shrines; the

affairs of the respective families. The churches also have them, on more ecclesiastical and stricter lines.

Perhaps this charming naïveté of devotion reaches its height among the Marseillais, but Rome itself has—or, at least, had—a goodly share of the same spirit. At the end of Advent, the city was formerly visited by shepherds from the Calabrian mountains, who brought their pipes, and played them before the shrines of the Virgin Mother. Hone, in his "Every Day Book" has a print represent these pastoral minstrels; and his account of the custom shows that it still obtained in his time. The presence of the shepherds must have added verisimilitude to the Christmas cribs set up in Catholic churches on Christmas Eve.

A modern traveller who regrets the coming of the Calabrian minstrels as obsolete, can yet tell of much picturesque realism connected with the *Presepi*, or Holy Cribs. He says: "The *Presepio* is artistically arranged in Rome as in Naples, but at the latter place live figures, both animal and human, are grouped round the manger. The animals sometimes become restive at the midnight masses, which it is customary in large farms and country-houses to have celebrated at an altar near the *Presepio*."

The honour here paid to dumb animals finds its echo in the belief, still current in parts of France and England, that, in remembrance of the Saviour's birth in a cattle-shed, all domestic animals are

endowed with speech from twelve o'clock midnight on Christmas Eve till mid-day of Christmas Day.

In the West of England it was once firmly believed that anyone who visited a cattle-shed on Christmas Eve would hear the beasts conversing. But such a visit was considered perilous—the irreverent eavesdropper being likely to hear words of ill omen, as in the legend of the farmer who heard his oxen comparing mournful notes of a certain hard day's work that lay before them in the future: "It is a long way up the hill to the churchyard, and our master is heavy!"

Brand speaks of a West Country peasant who told him that he had himself seen cattle fall on their knees at the Holy Hour, and heard them utter a groan "like Christian creatures."

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS IN SERBIA. On Christmas Eve, the Serbian father of a family will go to a wood and cut down a young oak, which he takes back with him to the house, saying as he enters: "Good evening and a merry Christmas." His household answer: "May God grant both to thee, and riches and honour!" and throw grains of corn over him. The oak is placed on the fire, and remains all night.

Christmas morning is hailed with repeated firing of pistols. Any visitor who comes must throw grains of wheat through the door, and exclaim "Christ is born!" Those on whom the grains

have fallen reply, "He is born indeed!" A kiss accompanies this salutation, then the visitor may enter, and will usually give a blow to the oak-log, to make sparks come out of it. According to the number of the sparks will be the household's oxen, horses, sheep, goats, pigs and beehives for the coming year. The very ashes of the log contain virtues, and are carefully preserved.

The table remains spread three days with the Christmas feast. The Serbians are exceedingly hospitable. To this feast everyone brings a lighted candle; and the candles, being all collected by the paterfamilias are placed together on a dish, to symbolize the union of the family. Grains of all kinds are served, and a cake of unleavened bread called the *tchisnitza*, in which is hidden a piece of silver. The person to whose portion the piece falls is considered sure of the best luck.

December 26

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY. The customs of this day are practically Christmas customs. The commemoration, which dates from the fourth century, has always been treated as an integral part of the Christmas Festival, and has been aptly styled "the second Christmas Day."

Yet, at first glance, the connexion is not very obvious. The carols of peace and goodwill have, abruptly, to be exchanged for the whistling of

murderous stones. Christian thought seems early to have recognized the incongruity, and set itself to reconcile it. In the calendar sequence of Stephen, John, and the Holy Innocents, we are asked to see an epitome of martyrdom. St. Stephen was martyr both *in will and deed;* St. John the Evangelist, in *will* alone, since he died a natural death, and the Holy Innocents, unconscious of their own self-sacrifice, gained the palm by their *involuntary deed.* So all the three sorts of martyrs are commemorated. It is the history, in little, of the Church that originated in the Manger-Throne; of the Kingdom Christ came to found. Gregory of Nyssa draws a beautiful and ingenious comparison, in particular, between Christ and the proto-martyr. "Christ for us came down to the valley of life; Stephen for Christ departed out of it."

So much for the strictly religious side of the festival. Few commemorations have been, in practice, less religiously observed. Its position in the calendar, which naturally deprives it of the usual accompaniment of, and prelude to a Saint's Day, has made for secularization. Stephen is a saint without a vigil. As the popular rhyme puts it:

"Blessed be Saint Stephen!
There's no fast on his even!"

The day was formerly considered a lucky one for bleeding horses; a practice spoken of as medicinal,

but probably, at the outset, capable of a magical interpretation, and suggestive of Odin-worship. A silver bit used, at one time, to be thrown into the troughs of the horses " for luck."

In the South of France, St. Stephen's Day is called " Straw Day," on account of a special benediction of the straw which then took place. It was also customary to bless the fields and pastures.

In France, in the Middle Ages, the Bishop of Fools (*l'Evêque fou*) who figured in the buffoonery known as the Feast of Fools (lasting from Childermas Day to the Feast of the Circumcision, January 1) was elected on St. Stephen's Day.

In the North of England, the cruel practice of hunting the wren, and stoning the unfortunate bird to death, is responsible for the popular title " wrenning day."

In some parts of Buckinghamshire, we hear of parishioners visiting the rectory or vicarage and demanding, by right of custom, a meal of bread and cheese and ale. This practice was known as " Stephening."

In North Yorkshire, goose-pies used to be made—probably from the remnants of the Christmas feast—and given away to friends and neighbours. A touch of magical meaning is supplied by the setting aside of *one* pie " to be kept until Candlemas Day."

In Brighton a quarter of the profits of the fishing-boats was paid over to the churchwardens of St. Nicholas's, the parish church, on St. Stephen's

Day. Another very odd custom once prevailed near Brighton. This was the fashion of bowling oranges along the high roads, near the town; probably as a sort of largesse.

STEPHENING. This custom was inquired into in 1834 by the commissioners appointed to inquire into charities. They found it to be without legal claim, and it was accordingly abolished. But some years before this formal disqualifying, it had been discontinued by one of its clerical victims, who had been in the habit of distributing a sum of money in its stead.

December 28

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS (CHILDERMAS DAY). Childermas Day enjoys the sinister reputation of being the most unlucky day in the calendar. The Irish call it "the cross day of the year." It is recorded of Edward IV, that his coronation, which should have taken place on December 28, was purposely postponed till the day following, "for luck." And the superstition long outlasted the Middle Ages, being current in the days of the *Spectator*. A writer in that periodical cites the case of a lady of his acquaintance, who, hearing that her little son's schoolmaster was going to start him in joint-hand on that day, protested against the bad omen, and sent a message to the

schoolmaster that the new branch of study must be deferred till the following day.

The Feast of the Holy Innocents is of a great antiquity in the Christian Church ; but the opinion of some of the Fathers as to the destiny of these unchristened martyrs caused the commemoration to be rather one of sadness than of triumph—there was no place in Heaven for unbaptized children ; and so popular imagination saw the Innocents in *Limbo*, the fairest part of hell, where the only torture was the absence of the Divine Presence ! Hence, there was a curious inconsistency about the liturgical colours to be used for the feast. If it fell on a week-day, the vestments were of the purple of mourning ; but on a Sunday, custom permitted red, as though the happy associations of the Christian Sabbath inspired the Church with hopes, and set the Innocents in their rightful place, as martyrs "baptized in blood." Holman Hunt's exquisite picture of the Holy Family journeying to Egypt, escorted by the ghosts of the dead Innocents in the shape of aureoled children, certainly represents the modern Christian feeling.

In spite of the idea of bad luck attaching to the day, it was observed in the Middle Ages with extravagant festivities, reminiscent of the *Saturnalia*, and full of unpleasant and coarse buffoonery. The well-known *Feast of Fools* was a travesty of the most sacred offices of the Church. Its office was said to have been composed by Pierre de Corbeil,

Archbishop of Sens from A.D. 1199 to 1221, and was most popular at Sens. The farce was enacted in a booth near the cathedral, and even, at one time, it would seem, in the cathedral itself. The Council of Cognac (A.D. 1260) interdicted dancing in the churches, and other irreverent travesties which had caused scandal. But the popularity of the Feast of Fools (which was continued by, and blended with, the Feast of the Ass, held on January 1) was greater than the fear excited by papal censure, and possibly those who took part in the performance did so without intentional irreverence. Both pageants were, at the outset, coarse popularizations of the Gospel-stories of the Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight into Egypt. The ass was an important personage in the procession, and was led up the cathedral aisles with every mark of honour, as the animal who had carried the Saviour of the World. The Latin chant still exists which was sung on this occasion:

"Orientis partibus
Adventanit Asinus
Pulcher et fortissimus
Sarcinis aptissimus
Hez, Sire Ane, hez!" etc.

In some places—for instance, at Beauvais—a young woman and her baby were mounted on

the ass; and more verisimilitude given to the scene.

It is singular that during the *Fêtes de l'Ane* in several parts of the service the clergy shouted *Evoé*, the old invocation to Bacchus, which sufficiently recalls the origin of the festival—pure Nature-worship. A part of the ceremony also consisted in drenching men stripped to the skin with pails of water—a ceremony of the solstice.

At Rouen the people elected an *Abbé des Cornards*. In 1540 this Abbe had a cortêge of 2500 persons richly dressed and masked, figuring in all sorts of allegorical representations. The actors played public characters, such as the Emperor, the Pope, with satires and mockery of all existing institutions. All the large towns of France had similar usages.

In Burgundy, a Guild was instituted for the purpose of celebrating the Feast of Fools. A *Mère Folle* (Mother of Fools) was elected to preside; and there were travesties of all existing institutions—of the courts of justice, the royal retinue, etc. The *Mère Folle* had a guard of honour, consisting of five hundred men; a motley crew which in itself constituted a nuisance. In some towns there was a Pope of Fools, and we have already spoken of the Bishop, elected on St. Stephen's Day.

In England, Childermas Day saw the final ceremonies connected with the boy bishop. His term

of office, beginning as we know, on December 6, ended on Childermas Day, when he had to deliver a sermon. The Statutes of St. Paul's School (A.D. 1518) require that the scholars should go, on Childermas Day, to St. Paul's Church, and "hear the Childe-Bishop preach." Each of these members of his congregation also made an offering of one penny to "the Childe-Bishop," and further financial benefit sometimes accrued to him from crowned heads. Edward III gave nineteen shillings and sixpence to the Boy Bishop who sang before him in his private chamber, and Mary also rewarded a Boy Bishop who delivered a panegyric on her virtues.

December 31

THE LAST NIGHT OF THE OLD YEAR. It is customary to sit up with many lights burning, and drinking wassail-cup, or hot whiskey and water mingled with spices, to "see the Old Year out, and the New Year in." The Scotchmen in London assemble outside St. Paul's Cathedral for this purpose, and all join together in singing "Auld Lang Syne," taking "hands across" so as to form a chain.

Sometimes masquerade balls are given on New Year's Eve. It has always been a favourite time for telling fortunes; and formerly it was customary to watch in the churchyard until midnight, when

all who were to die within the coming year would pass like phantoms before the watcher.

The bells of all the churches round ring out a peal at midnight, and with this sound ringing in our ears, we bring our survey of the calendar to a close.

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